



Sumitra Ghose

DAVID COPPERFIELD

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DAVID COPPERFIELD

CHAPTER I

I was born at Blunderstone, in Suffolk, in a house called the Rookery. I was a posthumous child. My father's eyes had closed upon the light of this world six months when mine opened on it.

An aunt of my father's, and consequently a great-aunt of mine, was the principal magnate of our family. Miss Trotwood, or Miss Betsey, as my poor mother always called her, when she sufficiently overcame her dread of this formidable personage to mention her at all (which was seldom), had been married to a husband younger than herself. He was strongly suspected of having beaten Miss Betsey, and even of having once made some hasty but determined arrangements to throw her out of a two pair of stairs' window. These evidences of an incompatibility of temper induced Miss Betsey to pay him off, and effect a separation by mutual consent. Immediately upon the separation she took her maiden name again, bought a cottage in a hamlet on the sea-coast a long way off, established herself there as a single woman with one servant, and was understood to live secluded, ever afterwards, in an inflexible retirement.

My father had once been a favourite of hers, I believe; but she was mortally affronted by his marriage, on the ground that my mother was "a wax doll." She had not seen my mother, but she knew her to be not yet twenty. My father and Miss Betsey never met again. He was double my mother's age when he married, and of a delicate constitution. He died a year afterwards, and, as I have said, six months before I came into the world.

Miss Betsey came to see my mother just before her first confinement, and very kindly offered to adopt the child she was expecting. Miss Betsey had hoped that it would be a girl, and as soon as she was informed that my mother had given birth to a boy, she left our house in a huff, and never came back.

The first objects that assume a distinct presence before me, as I look far back into the blank of my infancy, are my mother with her pretty hair and youthful shape, and Peggotty with no shape at all.

There comes, out of the cloud, our house. On the ground-floor is Peggotty's kitchen, opening into a back yard; with a pigeon-house on a pole, in the centre, without any pigeons in it; a great dog-kennel in a corner, without any dog; and a quantity of fowls that look terribly-tall to me, walking about in a menacing and ferocious manner.

Here is a long passage—what an enormous perspective I make of it!—leading from Peggotty's kitchen to the front door. A dark store-room opens out of it. Then there are the two parlours; the parLOUR in which we sit of an evening, my mother and I and Peggotty—for Peggotty is quite our companion, when her work is done and we are alone—and the best parLOUR where we sit on a Sunday; grandly, but not so comfortably.

And now I see the outside of our house, with the latticed bedroom windows standing open to let in the sweet-smelling air, and the ragged old rooks'-nests dangling in the elm-tree at the bottom of the front garden.

That is among my earliest impressions.

Peggotty and I were sitting one night by the parLOUR fire, alone. I had been reading to Peggotty about crocodiles. When we had exhausted the crocodiles, and begun with the alligators, the garden-bell rang. We went out to the door; and there was my mother, and with her a gentleman with beautiful black hair and whiskers, who had walked home with us from church last Sunday.

He patted me on the head; but somehow, I didn't like

him or his deep voice, and I was jealous that his hand should touch my mother's in touching me—which it did. I put it away as well as I could.

Whether it was the following Sunday when I saw the gentleman again, or whether there was any greater lapse of time before he reappeared, I cannot recall.

Gradually, I became used to seeing the gentleman with the black whiskers whose name, I learnt, was Mr. Edward Murdstone. I liked him no better than at first, and had the same uneasy jealousy of him.

I was sitting quietly one evening (when my mother was out) with Peggotty, when she, after looking at me several times, said coaxingly:

"Master Davy, how should you like to go along with me and spend a fortnight at my brother's at Yarmouth? Wouldn't that be a treat?"

"Is your brother an agreeable man, Peggotty?" I inquired, provisionally.

"Oh, what an agreeable man he is!" cried Peggotty, holding up her hands. "Then there's the sea; and the boats and ships; and the fishermen; and the beach; and Am to play with——"

Peggotty meant her nephew Ham.

I was flushed by her summary of delights, and replied that it would indeed be a treat, but what would my mother say?

"Why then I'll as good as bet a guinea," said Peggotty, intent upon my face, "that she'll let us go. I'll ask her, if you like, as soon as ever she comes home. There now!"

"But what's she to do while we are away?" said I, putting my small elbows on the table to argue the point. "She can't live by herself."

"Oh bless you!" said Peggotty, looking at me again. "Don't you know? She's going to stay for a fortnight with Mrs. Grayper. Mrs. Grayper's going to have a lot of company."

Oh! If that was it, I was quite ready to go. I waited, in the utmost impatience, until my mother came home from Mrs. Grayper's (for it was that identical neighbour), to ascertain if we could get leave to carry out this great idea. Without being nearly so much surprised as I expected, my mother entered into it readily; and it was all arranged that night, and my board and lodging during the visit were to be paid for.

The day soon came for our going. We were to go in a carrier's cart, which departed in the morning after breakfast.

I am glad to recollect that when the carrier began to move, my mother ran out at the gate, and called to him to stop, that she might kiss me.

As we left her standing in the road, Mr. Murdstone came up to where she was, and seemed to expostulate with her for being so moved.

CHAPTER II

We made so many deviations up and down lanes, that I was quite tired, and very glad, when we saw Yarmouth. It looked rather spongy and soppy, I thought, as I carried my eye over the great dull waste that lay across the river.

We got into the street (which was strange enough to me), and smelt the fish, and pitch, and oakum, and tar, and saw the sailors walking about, and the carts jingling up and down over the stones.

"Here's my Am!" screamed Peggotty, "growed out of knowledge!"

He was waiting for us, in fact, at the public-house—a huge, strong fellow of six feet high, broad in proportion, and round-shouldered; but with a simpering boy's face and curly light hair that gave him quite a sheepish look. He was dressed in a canvas jacket, and a pair of very stiff trousers.

Ham carrying me on his back and a small box of ours

under his arm, and Peggotty carrying another small box of ours, we turned down lanes bestrewn with bits of chips and little hillocks of sand, and went past gas-works, rope-walks, boat-builders' yards, shipwrights' yards, ship-breakers' yards, caulkers' yards, riggers' lofts, smiths' forges, and a great litter of such places, until we came out upon the dull waste I had already seen at a distance when Ham said:

"Yon's our house, Mas'r Davy!"

I looked in all directions, as far as I could stare over the wilderness, and away at the sea, and away at the river, but no house could I make out. There was a black barge, or some other kind-of super-annuated boat, not far off, high and dry on the ground, with an iron funnel sticking out of it for a chimney and smoking very cosily; but nothing else in the way of a habitation that was visible to me.

"That's not it?" said I. "That ship-looking thing?"

"That's it, Mas'r Davy," returned Ham.

(If it had been Aladdin's palace, roo's egg and all, I suppose I could not have been more charmed with the romantic idea of living in it.) There was a delightful door cut in the side, and it was roofed in, and there were little windows in it; (but the wonderful charm of it was, that it was a real boat which had no doubt been upon the water hundreds of times, and which had never been intended to be lived in, on dry land.)

It was beautifully clean inside, and as tidy as possible. There was a table, and a Dutch clock, and a chest of drawers, and on the chest of drawers there was a tea-tray with a painting on it. There were some hooks in the beams of the ceiling, the use of which I did not divine then; and some lockers and boxes and conveniences of that sort, which served for seats and eked out the chairs.

All this I saw in the first glance after I crossed the threshold, and then Peggotty opened a little door and showed me my bedroom. It was the completest and most desirable bedroom ever seen—in the stern of the vessel; with a little

window, where the rudder used to go through; a little looking-glass, just the right height for me, nailed against the wall, and framed with oyster-shells; a little bed, which there was just room enough to get into; and a nosegay of seaweed in a blue mug on the table. The walls were whitewashed as white as milk, and the patchwork counterpane made my eyes quite ache with its brightness.

We were welcomed by a very civil woman (Mrs. Gummidge) in a white apron, whom I had seen curtseying at the door when I was on Ham's back, about a quarter of a mile off. Likewise by a most beautiful little girl (Emily), with a necklace of blue beads on, who ran away and hid herself. By and by, when we had dined in a sumptuous manner off boiled dabs, melted butter, and potatoes, with a chop for me, a hairy man with a very good-natured face came home. As he called Peggotty "Lass," and gave her a hearty smack on the cheek, I had no doubt he was her brother, and so he turned out—being presently introduced to me as Mr. Peggotty, the master of the house.

"Glad to see you, sir," said Mr. Peggotty. "You'll find us rough, sir, but you'll find us ready."

I thanked him, and replied that I was sure I should be happy in such a delightful place.

After tea, when the door was shut and all was made snug (the nights being cold and misty now), it seemed to me the most delicious retreat that the imagination of man could conceive.

Peggotty informed me that Ham and Emily were an orphan nephew and niece, whom my host had at different times adopted in their childhood, when they were left destitute; and that Mrs. Gummidge was the widow of his partner in a boat, who had died very poor. He was but a poor bachelor himself, said Peggotty, but as good as gold and as true as steel—those were her similes.

I was very sensible of my entertainer's goodness, and listened to the women's going to bed in another little crib like

mine at the opposite end of the boat, and to him and Ham hanging up two hammocks for themselves on the hooks I had noticed in the roof, in a very luxurious state of mind, enhanced by my being sleepy. As slumber gradually stole upon me, I heard the wind howling out at sea and coming on across the flat so fiercely, that (I had a lazy apprehension of the great deep rising in the night.)

Almost as soon as the morning shone upon the oyster-shell frame of my mirror I was out of bed, and out with little Em'ly, picking up stones upon the beach.

So the fortnight slipped away.

At last the day came for going home. I bore up against the separation from Mr. Peggotty and Mrs. Gummidge, but my agony of mind at leaving little Em'ly was piercing. We went arm-in-arm to the public-house where the carrier put up, and I promised, on the road, to write to her.

CHAPTER III

Now, all the time I had been on my visit, I had been ungrateful to my home and had thought little or nothing about it. But I no sooner turned towards it, than my reproachful young conscience seemed to point that way with a steady finger; and I felt, all the more for the sinking of my spirits, that it was my nest, and that my mother was my comforter and friend.)

This gained upon me as we went along; so that the nearer we drew, and the more familiar the objects became that we passed, the more excited I was to get there, and to run into her arms. But Peggotty, instead of sharing in these transports, tried to check them (though very kindly), and looked confused and out of sorts.

Blunderstone Rookery would come, however, in spite of her.

The door opened, and I looked half laughing and half crying in my pleasant agitation, for my mother. It was not she, but a strange servant.

"Why Leggett?" I said. "Why? isn't she come home?"

"Yes, yes, Master Davy," said Peggotty. "She's come home. What a bit, Master Davy, and I'll—I'll tell you something!"

When she had got down she took me by the hand, led me wandering into the kitchen, and shut the door.

"Leggett!" said I, quite frightened. "What's the matter?"

"Nothing's the matter, bless you, Master Davy, but I—she answered, after a number of apparent sighs.

"You see, dear, I should have told you before now—said Peggotty—but I hadn't an opportunity. I ought to have made it, perhaps—but I don't exactly know what was always the ~~secret~~ secret, for exactly, in Peggotty's tongue of words, bring my mind to it!"

"Go on, Peggotty," said I, more frightened than before.

"Master Davy," said Peggotty, untying her bonnet with a shaking hand, and speaking in a breathless sort of way. "What do you think? You have got a Pa?"

I trembled, and fished white. (Something I don't know what or how connected with the grave in the churchyard and the raising of the dead, seemed to strike me like an unwholesome wind.)

"A new one," said Peggotty.

"A new one?" I repeated.

Peggotty gave a gasp, as if she were swooning, something that was very hard and putting out her hand said

"Come and see him."

"I don't want to see him."

— "And your mama?" said Peggotty.

I ceased to draw back, and we went straight to the best parlour where she left me. On one side of the fire, sat my mother; on the other Mr Murdstone. My mother dropped her work, and arose hurriedly, but timidly, I thought.

"Now Clara my dear," said Mr. Murdstone. "Be ~~well~~^{kind} to yourself always, and you will have Davy now; how do you do?"

I gave him my hand. After a moment of surprise I went and kissed my mother. She kissed me, patted me gently on the shoulder, and sat down again to her work. I could not look at her. I could not look at him. I knew quite well that he was looking at us both, and I turned to the window and looked out there at some sticks that were drooping there in the cold.

As soon as I could remember I kept quiet.

If the room to which my bed was removed were a sufficient thing that could give evidence I might appeal to it this day to bear witness for me what a heavy load I carried to it. I went up there, sat down with my small hands crossed, and thought.

I thought of the oddest things. Of the shape of the roots of the rocks in the ceiling of the paper in the wall of the floors in the wind-walls making ~~steps~~^{rises} in them; on the press, of the washstand being ~~upright~~^{up} on its three legs and having a dislodged something about it. I was trying all the time, and I rolled myself up in a corner of the center-pane and cried myself to sleep.

I was awakened by somebody saying "Here he is!" and uncovering my hot head. My mother and Peggotty had come to look for me, and it was one of them who had done it.

"Davy," said my mother. "What's the matter?"

I thought it was very strange that she should ask me, and answered, "Nothing." I turned over on my face. I recollect to hide my trembling lip which answered her with greater truth.

"Davy!" said my mother. "Davy, my child!"

I dare say no words she could have uttered would have affected me so much, than as her calling me her child. I had

was there in the bed-sheets, and pressed her from me with my hand when she would have raised me up.

"This is your doing, Pepperty, you cruel thing!" said my mother. "I have no doubt at all about it. How can you return me to your conscience? I wonder, to prepare my own day against me, or against anybody who is dear to me? What do you mean by it, Pepperty?"

Poor Pepperty lifted up her hands and eyes, and ~~long~~
answered it in a sort of stupor of the grave I scarcely recollect after this, "I can forgive you, Mrs Copperfield, and for what you have said to me, may you never be truly sorry!"

I felt the touch of a hand that I knew was better than poor Pepperty's, and stepped to my feet at the bed-side. It was Mr Mordstone's hand, and he kept it on my arm as he said,

"What! That's gone, my love. Have you forgotten—Frimness, my dear?"

"How very sorry Edward and my mother—I meant ~~she~~—are to you, poor child! I am so ~~so~~ comforted."

"Can you believe my love," said Mr Mordstone, "I said until I will ~~never~~ do better. My love! I bring a cushion up face on Pepperty's way to bed with her mother out, and dismissed her with a smile and a voice—'Do you know your mistress's name?'"

The time had been my mother's in long terms, so I answered Pepperty, "I used to know."

"That's true," he answered. "But I think I heard you say I used to call her by name. It's odd, how the bus takes names you know. Will you remember that?"

Pepperty with some misery grieved at me, extruded her self out of the room without repining, saying, I suppose that she was expected to go, and had no excuse for remaining. When we two were left alone, he shut the door, and sitting on a chair and leaning me against before him looked steadily into my eyes.

"I say, he said, making his lips thin, by pressing them

"Whether I have an astute horse or dog to deal with, what do you think I do?"

"I don't know."

"I beat him."

I only answered in a kind of breathless whisper, but I felt, ~~in~~ my voice that my breath was short now.

I make him wear a hot iron. I say to myself. I might that few would if it were to get round too much capital. I should do it. What is that upon your face?"

"Dirt," I said.

If I saw it was the mark of tears as well as I. But if he had asked the question twenty times each time with twenty down. I believe my baby heart would have burst before I would have told him so.

You have a good road between us for a mile below here. " Wish that fool of me and come down with me."

He pointed to the walk, stand and motioned me with his hand to obey him directly.

"Cara, my dear," he said when I had joined him, and he walked me into the outer room where his bed stood ready. "you will not be made in any place of my house. I have. We need soon impressions of you for business."

We dined alone, we three together. I gathered from what he said, that an elder sister of his was coming to stay with us, and that she was expected that evening. I am not certain whether I found out then or afterwards, that without being actively concerned in any business he had some stake there, or some annual charge upon the profits of a wine-merchant's house in London with which his family had been connected from a great grandfather's time, and in which his sister had some like interest.

* CHAPTER IV *

After dinner, when we were sitting by the fire, and I was minding an excuse to Foggotty without baring the hard truth

pack drove up to the garden gate, and Mr. Murdstone went out to receive the visitor. My mother followed him. I was timidly following her when she turned round at the parlour-door in the dark, and taking me in her arms, as she had been used to do, whispered me to give my new father and me obedient to him.

It was Miss Murdstone who was arrived, and a gloomy-looking lady she was, dark like her brother whom she greatly resembled in figure and voice. I had never at that time seen such a face; no face altogether as Miss Murdstone was.

She was brought into the parlor with many tokens of welcome, and there she formally recognized my father as a new and near relation. Then she looked at me and said

"Is that your boy, sister-in-law?"

"My master, whom we called the

"General,"" speaking," said Miss Murdstone. "I don't know. How d'ye do, boy?"

Under these cheery-sounding circumstances I replied that I was very well, and that I hoped she was the same, with so bold and different grace, that Miss Murdstone disposed of me in two words:

"Wants money?"

As well as I could make out she had come for good and had no intention of ever going again. She began to "help my master" next morning, and was in and out of the store-closet all day putting things to rights and making havoc in the old arrangements.

She was up before anybody in the house was stirring.

On the very first morning after her arrival, when my mother came down to breakfast and was going to make the tea, Miss Murdstone gave her a kiss on the cheek which was her nearest approach to a kiss, and said

"Now Clara my dear I am come here you know, to relieve you of all the trouble I can. If you'll be so good as

to give me your keys, my dear. I b attend to all this sort of thing in future."

From that time Miss Murdstone kept the keys in her own little bag all day, and under her pillow all night; and my mother had no more to do with them than I had.

My mother did not suffer her authority to pass from her without a shadow of protest. One night when Miss Murdstone had been telling certain household plans to her brother, of whom he regarded his approach as very nearer suddenly began to cry, and said she thought she might have been consulted.

"Clara!" said Mr. Murdstone sternly. "Clara! I wonder at you."

"Oh, it's very well to say you wonder, Edward!" cried my mother—and it's very well for you to talk about firmness—but you wouldn't like it yourself. It's very hard that in my own house——"

"My own house?" repeated Mr. Murdstone. "Clara!"

"Our own house, I mean," faltered my mother, evidently frightened. "I hope you must know what I mean, Edward—it's very hard that in your own house I may not have a word to say about domestic matters."

"Edward," said Miss Murdstone, "let there be an end of this. I go to-morrow."

I am sure, my poor mother went on at a grievous disadvantage, and with many tears, "I don't want anybody to go. I should be very miserable and unhappy if anybody was to go. I don't ask much. I am not unreasonable. I only want to be consulted sometimes. I am very much obliged to anybody who assists me, and I only want to be consulted as a mere form, sometimes. I thought you were pleased, once, with my being a little inexperienced and girlish. Edward—I am sure you said so—but you seem to hate me for it now, you are so severe."

"Edward!" said Miss Murdstone, again, "let there be an end of this. I go to-morrow."

' Jane Murdstone. I wonder! Mr. Murdstone. Will you be silent? How dare you?' W'

Miss Murdstone made a few steps after poor little David out of it before her eyes.

One day next morning rather earlier than usual I passed outside the parlour door on my way to my mother's room; she was very earnestly and leisurely reading. Miss Murdstone had pardon, what that was granted, and a perfect right to do so. I never knew my mother afterwards to give so opinion on any matter without first appealing to Miss Murdstone, or without having first ascertained by some sure means what Miss Murdstone's opinion was.

(The girl my master it was in the Murdstones he had declared the Murdstone religion which was strict and severe.) I went round the tremendous stairs with which we used to go to church, and the hanged air of the place. If I move a finger or touch a morsel of my fare Miss Murdstone punishes with her prayer-book and nose-hair snippers.

There had been some talk on the subject of my going to boarding school. Mr. and Miss Murdstone had discussed it and my mother had of course said what she could. Nothing however was determined on the subject yet. In the meantime I taught myself at home.

Shall I ever forget those lessons! I had been appointed to learn and write along with my mother, and I had lived alone together. I can faintly remember leaving the alphabet at her knee. To this day when I look open the fat back letters in the primer their neat and pretty shapes seem to present themselves even now before me as they used to do. But they remain nothing of respect or importance. On the corners (I seem to have walked along a path of flowers as far as the crossroads, and to have been started by the gentleness of my mother's voice and manner at the way) (but these same reasons will suggest to me I repeat) (on the other hand at my poor and niggard hands do I do every and misery))

Let me remember how it used to be and bring one morning back again.

I come into the ~~room~~ and best part after breakfast, with my books in exercise book and a slate. My mother is ready for me at her writing-table, but not half so ready as Mr. Mordstone in his eagerness by the window (though he pretends to be reading a book) or as Miss Mordstone, sitting near my mother. The very sight of them has such an influence over me that I begin to feel the words I have been at infinite pains to get into my head all sailing away and going I don't know where. I wonder where they do go by the way.)

I hand the first book to my mother. Perhaps it's a grammar, perhaps a history or geography. I take a last drowning look at the page and leave it to her, and she starts off again at a reading-pen which I have got it fresh. I trip over a word. Mr. Mordstone looks up. I fumble, trip over his husband's words and stop. I think my mother would know me if I took it if she could, but she does not dare. She goes on still gazing at them while the book lies flat on the desk, to be worked out when my other tasks are done.

There is a ~~kind~~^{sort} of chain wrecks every night, and it swells like a rolling snowball. The longer it gets the more stupid I get. The curse is so baneful and I feel that I am wallowing in such a bog of nonsense that I give up all idea of getting out, and abdicate myself to my fate. The deepest pity is which my mother and I look at each other as I ~~lie~~ on ~~is~~ truly me an' body.

One morning when I went into the parlour with my books, I found my mother ~~sitting~~ ~~near~~ ~~me~~ as Miss Mordstone looking stern, and Mr. Mordstone holding something round the bottom of a cane—a little and rather one which he left off building when I came in and passed and switched in the air.

"I tell you, ma," said Mr. Mordstone, "I have been often flogged myself."

"Certainly, my dear Jane," entered my mother ~~in her~~ weekly.
"But—but do you think it did Edward good?"

"Do you think it did Edward harm, Clara?" asked Mr Murdstone, gravely.

"That's the point," said his sister.

To this my mother returned, "Certainly, my dear Jane," and said no more.

I felt apprehensive that I was personally interested in this dialogue, and sought Mr Murdstone's eye as it lighted on mine.

"Now David," he said, "you must be far more careful to-day than usual." He gave the cane another pause, and another switch, and having finished his preparation of it, laid it down beside him, with an impressive look, and took up his book.

This was a good freshener to my presence-of-mind, as I began to sing. I felt the words of my lessons slipping off, not one by one, or line by line, but by the entire page.

We began badly, and went on worse. I had come in with an idea of distinguishing myself rather, conceiving that I was very well prepared, but it turned out to be quite a mistake. Book after book was added to the heap of failures, Miss Murdstone being firmly watchful of us all the time. At last my mother burst out crying.

"Clara!" said Miss Murdstone, in her warning voice.

"I am not quite well, my dear Jane, I think," said my mother.

I saw him wink, slyly, at his sister, as he rose and said, taking up the cane:

"Why, Jane, we can hardly expect Clara to bear, with perfect firmness, the worry and torment that David has occasioned her to-day. That would be stoical. Clara is greatly strengthened and improved, but we can hardly expect so much from her. David, you and I will go up stairs, boy."

As he took me out at the door, my mother ran towards him. Miss Murdstone said, "Curd! are you a perfect fool?" and interposed. I saw my mother stop her ears then, and I heard her crying.

He walked me up to my room slowly and gravely and, when we got there, suddenly twisted my head under his arm.

"Mr. Murdstone, sir," I said to him, "Dad! Pray don't beat me. I have tried to earn it, but I can't afford while you and Miss Murdstone are by. I can't indeed!"

"Can't you, indeed, David?" he said. "Well, try that."

He held my head as in a vice and I twisted round him somehow and stopped him for a moment, cursing him not to beat me. It was easy for a moment that I stopped him, for no cut the heavy air so that he could not move; and in the same instant I caught his nose with what he held in the man's mouth, between my teeth, and bit it through. It set my teeth on edge to think of it.

He beat me then as the wood have beaten me to death. Above all the noise we made I heard them running up the stairs, and crying out—I heard my mother crying—it—and Poppetty. Then he was gone, and the door was locked outside, and I was lying, fevered and hot and torn, and sore, and ringing in my pain way, upon the floor.

How well I recollect was I to discover what an unnatural silence seemed to reign through the whole house! I crawled up from the floor and saw my face in the glass, so swarthy and ugly that I almost shamed me. My stripes were ~~thin~~ and stiff and made me cry afresh when I moved. But they were coming to the greatest I feared.

It had begun to grow dark and I had shut the window I had been using. In the next part, with my head upon the glass, by turns crying, dozing, and ~~crying~~ ^{dozing} ~~listlessly~~ out, when the key was turned and Miss Murdstone came in with some bread and meat, and milk. These she put down upon the

table without a word, glaring at me the while with example firmness, and then retired locking the door after her.

I never shall forget the waking next morning. I was cheerful and fresh for the first moment but very soon felt weighed down by the stale and dismal oppressions of remembrance. Miss Mardon reappeared before I was out of bed, told me, in so many words, that I was free to walk in the garden for half an hour and no longer, and retired leaving the door open.

I did so, and did so every morning of my imprisonment which lasted five days. If I could have seen my mother alone, I should have given her on my bended knee her long-expected forgiveness, but I saw no one. Miss Mardon excepted, during one whole day, in which I went to the parlour, to which I was admitted by Miss Mardon, the most everybody else was present. Here I was exposed, in my pyjamas, all alone by myself near the door, and from this place I was conducted by my master to another room, from the two former positions. I only observed that my master was as far from me as he could be, and kept his face another way, so that I never saw it, and that Mr Murdoch's hand was bound up in a large linen wrapper.

The length of those five days I can carry no idea of to any one. They were the plainer of years in my remembrance.

CHAPTER V

On the last night of my restraint, I was awakened by hearing my own name spoken in a whisper. I started up in bed and putting out my arms in the dark said

— Is that you, Peppety?

There was no immediate answer, but presently I heard my name repeated, in a tone so very mysterious and awful, that I think I should have gone into a fit if it had not occurred to me that it must have come through the keyhole.

I groped my way to the door and putting out our tips to the keyhole, whispered,

"Is that you, Peggotty dear?"

"Yes, my own precious I am," she replied.

"How is mama dear Peggotty? Is she very angry with me?"

"No, Not very."

"What's going to be done with me, Peggotty dear? Do you know?"

"Hullo! Dear London" was Peggotty's answer.

"When, Peggotty?"

"To-morrow."

"Shan't I see mama?"

"Yes, said Peggotty. "Morning."

Then Peggotty tilted her mouth closer to the keyhole, and delivered these words:

"Davy, dear! What I want to say is that you must never forget me. But I'll never forget you, Davy. I take as much care of you as any man does, as ever I took of you. And I won't leave her!"

To Davy's great distress indeed! "O thank you! Thank you! Will you tell me more about Peggotty? Will you write and tell Mr. Lorry and little Fanny and Mrs. Gummidge and Hurstwick about me just as they might suppose and that I sent you all my love especially to little Emily? Will you, if you please, Peggotty?"

The kind nurse promised, and we both of us gazed the key-hole with the greatest affection. From that night there grew up in my breast a longing for Peggotty which I cannot very well define.

In the morning Miss Murdstone appeared as usual, and told me I was going to school, which was not altogether such news to me as she supposed. She also informed me that when I was dressed, I was to come down stairs into the parlour, and have my breakfast. There I found her in the very same old

With red eyes, who said I ran after you and got pardon from my suffering soul.

"I know who sent that you are a better man and I never try to be better, pray to be better! I am a fool, but I know a secret like that you should have some bad passions in your heart."

"My master performed his box there," said Miss Mardon, when words were over at the gate.

I looked for Pegot, but it was not she, but the last Mr. Mardon he reported. His former acquaintance the master was at the door, the box was taken out to the cart and lifted in.

"Christ!" said Miss Mardon, "it is you!
Really my husband ruined my master," said she, "I see. You are going far away again? Otherwise, my master? You will come home in two days, and be a better boy."

"Yes," said Miss Mardon, "he reported."

"Certainly my husband," replied my master, who was holding me. "I forgive you my dear son, God looks kindly upon you."

"Yes," said Miss Mardon, "he reported."

Miss Mardon was good enough to take me out to the cart and to say of the way that she desired I would not get off. I did not feel well and then I got into the cart and the bay horse walked off with it.

We might have gone a long time without and my pocket money road was quite wet through.

They say by that time cried as much as I could. I began to think I would no longer cry any more.

CHAPTER VI

What an awfully poor thing a girl can be when I saw him he instance. I remained it by a couch from him with where the master's art was now from. I sat down.

The guard's eye lighted on me as he was getting down, and he said at the booking-office door:

"Is there anybody here for a youngster booked in the name of Mr. Copperfield from Boulderside? Don't ask to be left till called for?"

Nobody answered.

"The Guard said if you please - and I asked him, leaning down:

"Is there anybody here for a youngster, booked in the name of Murdstone from Boulderside? Don't ask to be left till called for?" said the guard. "Come! Is there anybody?"

No. There was nobody.

I went into the booking-office and by invitation of the clerk on duty, passed behind the counter and sat down in the silent quiet where they searched the luggage. Here as I sat back the at the various packages and books a man entered and whispered to the clerk, who presently shunted me off the seat and pushed me over to him.

As I went out of the office hand in hand with this new acquaintance I stole a look at him. He was a ~~young~~ and ~~w~~ young man with bollow cheeks and a chin almost as high as Mr. Murdstone's.

"You're the new boy?" he said.

"Yes, sir," I said.

I supposed I was. I didn't know.

"I'm one of the masters at Salem House," he said.

I made him a bow and felt very much surprised.

We found the coach very near at hand, and got upon the ~~road~~, but I was so dead sleepy, that when we stopped on the road to take up something else they put me inside where there were no passengers, and where I slept prof. I., until I found the coach going at a footpace up a steep hill among green leaves. Presently, it stopped and had come to its destination.

A short walk brought us to the Master's house, which was enclosed with a high brick wall, and looked very dull. Over a door in the wall was a board with SALVIA Hause upon it, and through a lattice in this door we were surprised when we saw the boy, a sorry face which, I found, on the door being opened belonged to a stout man with a swelling in his wooden leg, who had a pipe in his mouth and had cut close all round his head.

'The new boy,' said the Master.

Sister House was a squat black thing with wavy hair and a flat fat face. It was half past three, and all the boys were at their several houses. Mr. Grindley the proprietor was down by the gateway with Mrs. Mrs. Mrs. Grindley. And I was given notice of my punishment for my conduct. All of which Mr. Mrs. the Master explained to me as we went along.

I could see the other inmates with the long time in the court for whom I had late given I had over seen, a poor crew. A big ruffian with a long nose of flesh and skin, and a face besmeared with paint, the painted Indian. Heaps of them, scolded and execrated by the party for being nowise worthy of the name of master, as scattered over the yard. There was a large, pale-faced fellow upon the roof, who I heard called a swell. It was a great and rather ugly boy, and not well behaved, ink stains on his clothes, and it had been told him from the first construction of the school how much he must stand in known for breaking the varying seasons of the year.

So, so, I said again, and I passed on, and I wrote, went walking on a desk, and here those words—'Take care of him, the later.'

I took up the desk again, and a saying of at least a great deal about him. I thought I looked around with anxious eyes. I could see nothing of him. I was still engaged

In peering at me when Mr. Men asked me what I did up there.

"I beg your pardon sir, and I will if you please, I'm looking for the dog."

"Dog? said he. "What dog?"

"Isn't it a dog, sir?"

"Isn't what a dog, sir?"

"That's to be taken care of sir, that bites?"

"No, Copperfield," said he, gravely, "that's not a dog. That's a boy. My instructions are Copperfield, to put this placard on your back. I am sorry to make such a beginning with you, but I must do it."

With that he took me down, and tied me hand and foot, which was neatly contrived for the purpose, on my shoulders like a knapsack, and wherever I went afterwards I had the compliment of carrying it.

What I suffered from that placard not I can imagine. Whether it was possible for people to see me or not I always fancied that some body was reading it. That every time with the wretched leg it increased my suffering. He was an authority, and if he ever saw me now, or against a tree or a wall, or the brase he round out from his back a dozen most judicious words. "Hallo, you art! You Copperfield show this badge ~~and~~, and I'll report you!" The place proved with a bare ground yard, open to all the back of the house and the offices, and I knew that the servants read it, and the butcher read it, and the baker read it, that everybody, in a word, who came backwards and forwards to the house of a master when I was ordered to walk there, read that I was to be taken care of. Or I bat. I recollect that I was very soon to have a dread of myself as a kind of wild boy who did no

One day I was informed by Mr. Mel, that Mr. Creakle would be home that evening. In the evening, after tea, I heard that he was come. Before bed time, I was fetched by the man with the wooden leg to appear before him.

Mr. Creake's part of the house was a great deal more comfortable than ours, and he had a large front garden that looked pleasant after the dusty prairie. It seemed to me a bold thing to go to the door, so I took a long and comfortable walk up the garden path. According to Mr. Creake's present state of mind, I might have been taken to Mr. Wickes' premises. But so it turned out, when I was admitted into it, that I only saw Mrs. Wickes, Miss Crispin, who were both there in the parlour, and waiting for Mr. Creake, a stout gentleman with a white mustache, and seated in an arm-chair, with a book or just better news in his hand.

"Good morning, Mr. Creake," said the young gentleman whose name was to be told but not named.

The woodcutter did not turn me away so as to exhibit the power of his hand, having sufficient time for a full survey of it, turned me over to him with my hands to Mr. Creake, and posted me off to Mr. Creake's side. Mr. Creake's face was very red; his eyes were sunken and deep in his head, he had thick veins in his forehead at little times and a large chin. He was bald in the top of his head and had some thin wet-looking hair that was just turning grey, brushed across each temple so that the two sides interlaced on his forehead. But the circumstance about him which impressed me most, was, that he had no voice but spoke in a whisper. The exertion this cost him, of the consciousness of talking in that feeble way, made his eyes look much more angry.

"Now," said Mr. Creake, "What's the report of this boy?"

"There's nothing against him yet," returned the man with the wooden leg. "There has been no opportunity."

I thought Mr. Creake was disappointed.

"Come here, sir," said Mr. Creake, beckoning to me.

"I have the happiness of knowing your father in law," whispered Mr. Creake, taking me by the ear, "and a worthy man he is, and a man of strong character. He knows me,

"and I know this. Do you know me?" said Mr. Christie.

¹¹ Not even the most ardent supporters of the party.

"Now, Mr. Farmer, is this a good time?"

"You will soon hear me call him with the
woodcutter. I often used to do this when I was young, with
his strong voice as Mr. Clegg's neighbour's child."

I was very much surprised and I have no idea if he pleased me to do it, as it was a very sharp pinch he pinched it so hard

{ I often went to see Mr. Tinker, but
it goes best with a few drops of water
into my eyes. "I'm a Tartar.")

A Tower - and the man with the word in leg

"When I say I'll do a thing, I'll do it," said Mr. Credible
and when I say I won't have a third drink I will have it
done."

"—Will have a thing done, I won't have it done," repeated the man with the wooden leg.

"Now you have begun to know me, my young friend, and
you may go. Take him away," said Mr. Creake.

I was very glad to be ordered away. But I had a petition
on my mind which concerned me so nearly, that I couldn't
help having though I wondered at my own courage.

"If you please, Sir—"

Mr Creagle whistled, "Hah! What's this?" and bent his eyes upon me as if he would have burnt me up with them.

"If you please, sir, I faltered, "if I might be allowed (I am very sorry indeed, sir for what I did) to take this writing off, before the boys come back —

Whether Mr. Creakle was in earnest, or whether he only did it to frighten me I don't know, but he made a sort of his chair before which I precipitately retreated.

CHAPTER VI

Next morning Mr. Sharp came back. Mr. Stoe was the first master, and superior to Mr. Mel. Mr. Mel took his meals with the boys, but Mr. Sharp dined separately at Mr. Croakle's table.

Tony Tradibaw was the first boy who re-appeared. He introduced himself by informing me that I must find his name in the right light-colored box, you never except it.

It was a heavy task to search for him, but I did so, came back first. He, on the very word so much that he saved me from the effort, was the most desirous of acquaintance, by presenting me to every other boy who came back, great or small, in inquiry of his name. In this form of introduction I took him. Here you are! Happy, too, the greater part of the boys came back bewigged, and were not so venturesome at my expense as I had expected. Some of them certainly did not meet me the way I left us, and the greater part of them met me the same, supposing that I was still in England, seeking for just such lads, and asking for them. This was not quite, indeed, among the boys who came back, but on the whole it was true, — though I had anticipated.

I think he was the only young lad I received into the nation, however, and I do not mean to value this boy, who was not likely to be a good master and was very good-looking, and at least half a dozen years younger, I was certainly before him, — that is, I had under a shed in the grass-ground, one of the punishments of my punishment, and was pleased to express his opinion that it was 'a jolly, jolly,' for which I became used to him ever afterwards.

"I'll support you, said Steerforth. 'I'll take care of you.'

"You're very kind. I may be returned. 'I am very much obliged to you.'

I had no real objection at the school, and in listening to Dr. D. I heard that Mr. Creake had not preferred his son to being a Tarter with so much that he was the sternest and most severe master in the school about him, right and left, every boy of twelve having to among the boys like a tiger, and also as it was remarkable, that he knew nothing himself, but the secret was, that he had been a good many years ago a schoolmaster in the Strand, and had taken up the schoolroom after being bankrupt, in doing and teaching away with Miss Creake's money.

I knew that the man was the schoolmaster whose name was Creake. Was not he the man who had formerly come from the hospital, and had gone into the education trade? Mr. Creake, as I said, was supposed to be the master of the school, but I knew Mr. Creake was not so, and having a notion of his secret work for him, and knowing his secrets.

But the greatest wonder of all I heard of Mr. Creake was that there was no way to the schoolroom where he never seemed to have a key, and that no one was to see forth. Steerforth himself confirmed this.

Baker began to suspect next day. A general impression was to the effect that he had got by the rear of schoolroom the schoolroom could not be seen or heard as such when Mr. Creake entered it or left it, and stood in the doorway, and upon the floor went in a stoop back answering his captives.

James stood at Mr. Creake's elbow. He had no access to the right to speak himself so far as I saw for the two were all struck silent by fear and wonder.

Mr. Creake spoke to James first.

"Now then, this is a new boy. Take care what you're about, in this new business. Get fresh up to the lessons, I advise you for I come fresh up to the judgment. I won't flinch. It will be of no use your fooling yourselves you will be rub-

the marks out that I shall never
get to work every boy!"

When this length of paper was over, and I had
shoved it up, Mr. Micawber said to me, "Look at this, and tell
me that it is not true that he was famous for biting,
too." He took a walk in the sun, and asked me what I
thought of the statement. Was it ~~calculated~~ to be true? Was
it a dog's tooth? But that's a long story. Did it
bite ~~any~~? Did it bite? At every question he gave me a fleshly
bit which I could see written in my hand.

Now that I mean to say there were special traps set
about the school which I passed. On the contrary, in
consequence of the boys' impudence the master and I were visited
with similar rebukes. Let me say Mr. Traddles made the record
of the school days. How the establishment was working and
crying before the day's work began, and how much of it had
written and erased before the day's work was over. I am really
afraid to recollect that I should seem to do justice.

In a tight sky the sun poor Traddles was the merriest
and most resolute of all the boys. He was always bemoaning
I think he was cold every day that half year except one
holiday Monday when he was only ruled in both hands and
was always going to write to his uncle about it, and never did.
After laying his head on the desk for a little while he would
cheer up somehow begin to laugh again and draw skeletons
all over his slate, before his eyes were dry. I used at first to
wonder what comfort Traddles found in drawing skeletons.

He was very honorable. Traddles was said held it as a
solemn duty in the house to stand between another. He suffered
for this on several occasions, and particularly ones, when
Stevforth impugned in church and the Reader thought it was
Traddles, and took him out. I see him now going away de-
fiantly, despising these recreations. He never said who
was the real offender though he knew well for it was he, and
was imprisoned so many hours that he came forth with a

the chuburn of anxiety swirled over me. I felt
despair. But he had his reason. So far as there
was nothing of the kind in Freddie's mind but that to
be the highest prize. For my part, I could but
think a good deal, though I was too much given to
trust him, and another like him, to have won such
a remarkable prize.

Sister Fath continued her interview with me and passed a
very useful friend to me. It was Mr. Cook, who was
honoured with his company. He could not at all account
he hasn't offend us from Mr. Cook, who was very even
with me, but whenever I had mentioned words, that would
he always told me that I wanted a man, but that
he wouldn't have stood it himself.

CHAPTER VIII

Torn at last, at 10 o'clock and to my surprise and
delight, I found myself ready to mail and going home. Soon
I was at our house, and when I set foot in the hall, many
memories were awakened by the sound of my mother's
voice in the old piano. She was singing in a low tone.

I believed from the sound and thought it was in which
my mother intended to sing, that she was alone. And I
went softly into the room. She was singing by the fire, looking
so absent, wherefore had she me a sign of regretting. Her
eyes were looking low, open as far, and she sat singing to it.
I was so far right, that she had no other companion.

I spoke her, and she started and looked. But among
me, she called me for her boy, her own boy, and coming
half across the room to meet me, keeping down on the
ground and kissing me, and lay her down on the bosom
near the fire, resting her head resting there and put its
hand up to my lips.

"He is your brother," said my mother, fending me away my pretty boy. My parent! That she was dead when I partly ate dinner and crawled down on the ground beside us and went and lay there still for a quarter of an hour.

It seemed that Mr and Miss Murdstone had gone out upon a visit to the next town, and would not return before night. I had never hoped for this. I had never thought it possible that we three — a mother and her two children — could be left alone for so long a time. The old days were come back!

We slept together by the fire-side. Peppotty was not able to sleep, but my mother would not let her do it, and made her dine with us.

Then we sat up till the small hours of midnight. I told them what a bad mother Mrs Creakle was, and they pitied me very much. I told them what a widow Trudy was, and they pitied her. But I did not tell them that Peppotty was a she-wolf, a ravening animal. Then I took the last of my money, which I was saving, and I said it lovingly,

It was about ten o'clock, and I kindled a candle, and went upstairs with my candle before Mr and Miss Murdstone came in.

I had no comfort about going down to breakfast in the morning, as I had never set eyes on Mr Murdstone since the day when I snatched my master's money. However, as it must be done, I went down and presented myself in the parlour.

He was sitting at the table with his back to it, while Miss Murdstone stood behind him. He looked as sternly as I ever did, but made no sign of recognition whatever.

I went up to him, and an instant of collision, and said, "I beg your pardon sir. I am very sorry for what I did, and I hope you will forgive me."

"I am glad to hear you are sorry I will be repaid
The hand he gave me was the hand I had bitten. I could
not restrain my eye from resting for a instant on a red spot
upon it.

"How do you do, ma'am?" I said to Miss Murdstone.

"Ah dear me!" sighed Miss Murdstone, giving me the
teas caddy scoop instead of her fingers. "How long are the
holidays?"

"A month, ma'am."

"Counting from when?"

"From to-day, ma'am."

"Oh!" said Miss Murdstone. "Then there is no day
~~off~~?"

I was not a favorite there when at last I felt that I
made them as uncomfortable as they made me. If I went
into the room where the men and they were talking together
had my jacket off, and the jacket was cold would stick
over the back from the heat of my blazoo. If Mr.
Murdstone was not there I could not have. If Miss
Murdstone were there or not I did not care. I had percep-
tion enough to know that my mother was the victim always,
that she was afraid I would say to him or be kind to me ~~lest~~ and
she had give them some off to her master if doing so and
receive a lecture afterwards.

In the evening sometimes, I waited and sat with Peggoty
in the kitchen. There I was comfortable, and not afraid of
being noticed. But this resource was not approved of in the
parlour.

Thus the holidays dragged away until the morning came
when Miss Murdstone said, "Here's the last day off! and
gave me the closing cup of tea of the vacation.

I was not sorry to go. I had layed into a stupid state
but I was recovering a little and looking forward to Steerforth
albeit Mr. Creakle loomed behind him.

How I longed to be at home! How I longed to be at home! Next day I was off again, and the boat-train took me to London. I lay in my sailor-fishery on my couch in the sun, in the bright light of the sun-room, with a skipper's cap on his head there to sift up the foggy tea-leaves.

It was about ten o'clock when I had been so long in the sun-room, when Mr. Sapsea entered and said,

"David Copperfield, sit down in the parlor. I have news for you. I am sorry to tell you, David, that Mr. Micawber has just died. He died this morning, and a new, up-to-date, and very interesting man he was."

"I am sorry, Mr. Copperfield, and Mrs. Micawber, and all the world over, to tell you that I want to speak to you concerning your little boy. There is something to tell you, my child."

Mr. Sapsea sat down by me. I looked back over his shoulder without looking at me.

I looked at her earnestly.

"When you came away from home at the end of the month, I sent Mrs. Micawber after a grocer. 'Were they all well?' After an hour or two. 'Who were married with?'

I trembled with fear, distinctly knowing why, and still asked after her marriage, in another attempt to answer

"Please, send me. I have to tell you that I hear there is more to tell than is necessary."

A mutual pause between Mrs. Micawber and me, and her figure seemed to move in it for an instant. Then I felt the burning tears begin to fill my eyes, and it was steady again.

"She is very ill, poor Mrs. Micawber," she added.

I knew all now.

"She is dead."

There was no need to tell me so. I had already broken out into a torrent of weeping, and left an orphan in the wide world.

She was very kind to me. She kept me there all day, and left me alone sometimes, and I cried, and wore myself to sleep, and awoke and cried again. When I could cry no more, I began to think.

I thought of our house shut up and hushed. I thought of the little baby who Mrs. Crispin said had been pining away for some time, and who, they believed, would die too. I thought of my father's grave in the churchyard by our house, and of my mother lying there beneath the tree I knew so well.

I left Salem House upon the morrow afternoon. I little thought then that I left it never to return.

When I reached home, I dropped out of the coach behind, as quickly as possible.

I was in Pegatty's arms before I got to the door, and she took me into the house. Her grief burst out when she first saw me, but she controlled it soon, and spoke in whispers, and wept softly, as if the dead could be disturbed. She had not been in bed I found for a long time. She sat up at night still, and watched. As long as her poor dear pretty was above the ground, she said, she would never desert her.

(If the funeral had been yesterday I could not recollect it better.)

When we go out to the door the bearers and their load are in the garden, and they move before us down the path, and past the elms, and through the gate, and into the church-yard, where I have so often heard the birds sing on a summer morning.

We stand around the grave. (The day seems different to me from every other day, and the light not of the same sort of a sadder colour.) Now there is a weeping bush which we have brought from home with what is resting in the casket; and where we stand bare-headed, I hear the voice of the cleric, man sounding rebuke in the open air, and yet distinct and plain saying I am the Resurrection and the Life with the Lord!) Then I hear sobs and, standing apart among

the lookers-on I see that good and faithful servant whom of all the people upon earth I love the best and unto whom my childish heart is certain that the Lord will one day say, " Well done!"

It is over and the earth is filled in, and we turn to come away.

Immediately after the funeral Miss Murdstone discharged Peggotty. When she left for Yarmouth I was permitted by Mr. Murdstone to accompany her. I was glad to meet my humble friends again after my bereavement. Peggotty soon married and I returned to Blunderstone after a short while I fell at once into a solitary condition. Mr. Murdstone and his sister now avoided me. Even the baby had died. I was not ill used, beaten or starved as before; but day after day, month after month, I was coldly neglected. (What would I have given to be sent to the hardest school to have been taught something anyhow anywhere!) P.

One evening Mr. Quinton a friend of Mr. Murdstone, came to see him. He lay at our house that night. After breakfast the next morning I had put my hair away, and was going out of the room, when Mr. Murdstone called me back. He then gravely repaired to another table where his sister sat herself at her desk. Mr. Quinton with his hands in his pockets stood looking out of the window, and I stood looking at them all.

" David " said Mr. Murdstone, " to the young this is a world for action, not for moping and drooping in

" As you do," added his sister

He gave her a look, half in remonstrance half in approval and went on:

" I suppose you know, David that I am not rich. At any rate, you know it now. You have received some considerable education already. Education is costly; and even if it were not, and I could afford it I am of opinion that it would not be at all advantageous to you to be kept at a school. What is before

you, is a fight with the world - and the sooner you begin it the better."

(I think it occurred to me that I had already begun it, in my poor way.)

" You have heard the counting house mentioned sometimes," continued Mr. Murdstone.

" The counting house sir?" I repeated.

" Of Murdstone and Grinby's in the wine trade," he replied.
" I think I have heard the business mentioned sir," I said.
" Mr. Quinion manages that business," he returned.

I gazed at the letter deferentially as he stood looking out of the window.

Mr. Quinion suggests that it gives employment to some other boys and that he sees no reason why it shouldn't, on the same terms, give employment to you," Mr. Murdstone resumed. " Those terms are that you earn enough for yourself to provide for your eating and drinking and pocket-money. Your lodgings (which I have arranged for) will be paid by the Board your washing."

" Which will be kept down to my estimate," said his sister.
" Your clothes will be looked after for you too," said Mr. Murdstone. " as you will not be able yet awhile to get them for yourself. So you are now going to London, David, with Mr. Quinion to begin the world on your own account."

CHAPTER IX

Now (I thus became, at ten years old a little labouring hind in the service of Murdstone and Grinby.) Their warehouse was at the water side. It was down in Blackfriars, and was a ~~cray~~ old house with a ~~wharf~~ of its own abutting on the water when the tide was in and on the mud when the tide was out and literally overrun with rats.

An important branch of Murdstone and Grin's trade was the supply of wines and spirits to certain packet ships I forgot now where they usually went. I know that a great many empty bottles were one of the necessities of the trade, and that certain men and boys were employed to examine them against the light, and to rinse and wash them. When the empty bottles ran short there were labels to be pasted on full ones, or corks to be fitted to them, or songs to be put upon the corks, or first I believe to be packed in cases. All this work was my work, and of the boys employed upon it I was one. My pay was six shillings a week.

On the first morning of my sojourning beginning to go on my own account the oldest of the regular boys was summoned to show me my master. He informed me that his father was a waterman. He also informed me that our principal competitor would be another boy whose father was a waterman who had the additional distinction of being a freeman.

No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sunk into a long沉思 and felt my hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man crushed in my bosom.

The next house I went to had just twelve, and there was general preparation for going to dinner when Mr. Quin tapped at the waiting-house window, and beckoned to me to go in. I went in and was introduced by him to a bold-headed, stoutish middle-aged gentleman in a brown jacket and black tights and shoes.

' This is Mr. Micawber and Mr. Quin is to me
Aunt, and the stranger that is my son.'

Mr. Micawber said Mr. Quin is well known to Mr. Murdstone. He takes orders for us on commission when he can get any. He has been written to by Mr. Murdstone on the subject of your wages and he will receive you as a lodger.

' My address said Mr. Micawber is Windsor Terrace,

City Lead. I used to keep up to you this evening and stated
you the number of the case were

I tried to talk with Mr. M. but first he told me it was for us to
him to offer to take that trouble.

Mr. —— law office in the city where he was engaged to
to Mrs. M. who had a child about a year old who
was, resting in the parlor when he came to see him. The
baby was one of twins.

There were two other people Mr. M. and his wife and
about four or five minutes after he came in he said he had
a letter addressed to him from Mr. —— of ——, who
was a son to the late —— and he had died.

I say this to you, Mr. M. was a son to the late
and two years ago he was married and he used to
take trouble. After I was married when I went with John
and I had the child I was very sick and I had a doctor
but Mr. M. was here and he said "the time of
private feeling must give way."

I said, "Yes, ma'am."

"Mr. M. was a different man when he came to you just
at present and Mrs. M. when she brought it to me
told me he had been ill. I don't know as

"I know that he was in the "Spencer" when he died.
He was a sort of town truant for a number of years before
he was law, and he did not do nothing that I am afraid.

"If Mr. M. was a son he can't give his son,
and Mrs. M. will be the poor woman the consequence, and
the worst they bring him to is the letter. Is not that
be obtained from some mother and anything on account be
obtained at present (not to mention her expenses from Mr.
M. ——)

I say Mr. M. —— said he had tried to exert
himself and we I have to do it said he. The entire of the
exterior of was perfectly covered with a great brass plate. On

which was engraved 'Mrs Micawber's Boarding Establishment for Young Ladies' but I never found that any young lady had ever been less so there, or that any young lady ever came, or proposed to come, or that the least preparation was ever made to receive any young lady. The only visitors I ever saw or heard of, were creditors. They used to come at all hours. At these times Mr Micawber would be transported with grief and mortification, even to the hump (as I was once made aware by a scream from his wife) of making motions at himself with a razor, but within half an hour afterwards he would push up his sleeves with extraordinary pertness, and go out hunting a tune with a greater air of gentry than ever. Mrs Micawber was quite as elastic. I have known her to be thrown into fainting fits by the king's taxes at three o'clock, and to eat lambchops breaded and drink warm ale (paid for with two tuppences that had gone to the pawnbroker) at four.

In this house, and with this family I passed my leisure time. My own elaborate breakfast of a pie, and not a pennyworth of milk, I provided myself, I kept another small loaf, and a morsel of cheese on a particular shelf of a particular cupboard, to make my supper on when I came back at night. This made a hole in the six or seven shillings I know well, and I was out at the wares ~~was~~ all day, and had to support myself on that money all the week.

Mr Micawber's difficulties were an addition to the distressed state of my mind. In my former state I became quite attached to the family. I have known him come home to supper with a flood of tears, and a declaration that nothing was now left but a jail, and go to bed making a calculation of the expense of putting new windows to the house. 'In case anything turned up,' which was his favourite expression. And Mrs Micawber was just the same.

At last Mr Micawber's difficulties came to a crisis, and he was arrested early one morning, and carried over to the King's Bench Prison in the Borough. He told me as he went

out of the house that the God of day had now gone down upon him—and I really thought his heart was broken and mine too. But I heard, afterwards, that he was soon to play a lively game at skittles, before noon.

In due time, Mr. Micawber was ordered to be discharged under the Insolvent Debtors Act, to my great joy. His creditors were not implacable, and Mrs. Micawber informed me that they had declared in open court that they bore him no malice.

I said to Mrs. Micawber immediately after this—

" May I ask, ma'am, what you and Mr. Micawber intend to do, now that Mr. Micawber is out of his difficulties, and at liberty? Have you settled yet?"

Mrs. Micawber replied, " My family are of opinion that, with a little interest, something might be done for a man of his ability in the Custom House. The influence of my family being local, it is their wish that Mr. Micawber should go down to Plymouth. They think it indispensable that he should be upon the spot."

" That he may be ready?" I suggested.

" Exactly," returned Mrs. Micawber. " That he may be ready, in case of anything turning up."

" And do you go too, ma'am?"

She shed tears as she replied—

" I never will desert Mr. Micawber. Mr. Micawber may have concealed his difficulties from me in the first instance, but his sanguine temper may have led him to expect that he would overcome them. The pearl necklace and bracelets which I inherited from mama, have been disposed of for less than half their value, and the set of coral, which was the wedding gift of my papa, has been actually thrown away for nothing. But I never will desert Mr. Micawber. No!" cried Mrs. Micawber, more affected than before. " I never will do it! It is of no use asking me!"

I felt quite uncomfortable—as if Mrs. Micawber's ~~is~~ ^{is} and I had asked her to do anything of the sort—and sat looking at her in alarm.

CHAPTER X

The Micawbers left soon after, and I too was obliged to run away again by a roundabout or other down into the country, to the only station I had in the world, and tell my story to my aunt, Miss Betsey.

As I did not even know where Miss Betsey lived, I wrote a long letter to Finsbury and asked her pertinently if she remembered. In the course of that letter I told Peggotty that I had written to her, but had no answer.

I sent a shorter one to her, and waited for an answer of about three weeks. She answered the first, and told me that Miss Betsey lived near Dover. I waited another week for my letter, and resolved to set out in quest of my aunt.

I took a sledge, but was soon unseated by a bad fit of giddiness, & fell on a rocky bank with a great deal of noise, & where I lay unconscious there was no time to call for帮助 assistance to Dover. I ran after him as fast as I could, but I had no horse to catch up with. I narrowly escaped being run over twenty times at least. It had a name. Now I lost him, now I saw him, now I lost him again, was cut off again, & what now shoted at now down in the grass, now up again, now running into somebody's arms, now running headlong at a post. At length I got sick to right at last, and doubting whether half London might not be this time be turning out for my apprehension, I left the young man to go where he would with my box and money, and putting on my hat never stopping to bid about for Greenwich which I had understood was on the Dover Road. I had now only three half-pence with me, but yet I had no intention of coming back.

I trudged on in sorrow through as fast as I could, until I happened to pass a little shop where it was written up that tailors and cutters of waistcoats were wanted, and that the best price was given for rags, bones, &c. I took the start.

My first experience with Mr. and Mrs. M. never suggested to me that there might be a means of helping off the waist for a little sum. I went up the next street, took off my waistcoat, and put it away under my arm, and came back to the shop, at which it was sold for three pence.

I found my party early that evening, but was too poor now that I could pay them the first time, so I gave them a short and a poor present, and said, 'I am afraid I can't get there even in that trim.'

They told me I needed to go further down the road, which I did, and came to a house. They told me to knock at the door at the back of the house, and when I knocked, a boy was on the **Dover Road**.

'Is there a room to let at Seven Holes, but I found it out,' said the boy. 'I am sorry, but I have none by it.'

They told him to go to another house, and he did so, and went to another house, and he did so, and so on, until about whom houses there were knock and knock again that night, and I learned of being in my old school, had nothing to do with the boy in the room. The warm hours of the sun and the ringing of the getting-up bell at Seven Holes awoke me next morning.

I got out Sunday through three and twenty miles on the way, it need not be said not very easily, for I was new to that kind of tool.

For the next morning that I could get taken very far that day, if I were to reserve my strength for getting to my journey's end. I resolved to make the size of my jacket its principal dimensions. It had to be sold after a good deal of haggling, to a drunkard in a shop-shop for only sixteen pence.

At last I reached Dover and found out my Aunt's house after a good deal of enquiry. It was a very neat little cottage with cheerful bow windows and a small square gravelled court or garden in front of it full of flowers carefully tended and smelling deliciously.

My shoes were by this time in a woeful condition. My hat was crushed and bent. My shirt and trousers, stained with heat, dew, grass, and the Kentish soil on which I had slept, were torn besides. My hair had known no comb or brush since I left London. My face, neck, and hands from unaccustomed exposure to the air and sun were burnt to a berry brown. In this plight and with a strong consciousness of it I waited to introduce myself to, and make my first impression on, my formidable aunt.

Now there came out of the house a lady with her handkerchief over her cap, and a pair of gardening gloves on her hands, wearing a gardening pocket like a woman's apron, and carrying a great knife. I knew her immediately to be Miss Betsey, for she came stalking out of the house exactly as my poor mother had so often described her stalking up our garden at Blunderstone Rookery.

I watched her, with my heart at my lips, as she marched to a corner of her garden, and stooped to dig up some little root there. Then without a scrap of courage, but with a great deal of desperation, I went softly in and stood beside her, touching her with my finger.

"If you please, ma'am," I began
She started and looked up.

"If you please, aunt."

"Eh?" exclaimed Miss Betsey, in a tone of amazement I have never heard approached.

"If you please, aunt, I am your nephew."

"Oh, Lord!" said my aunt. And sat flat down to the garden-path.

"I am David Copperfield of Blunderstone, in Suffolk—where you came on the night when I was born, and saw my dear mama. I have been very unhappy since she died—I have been slighted and taught nothing, and thrown upon myself, and put to work not fit for me. It made me run away to you. I was robbed at first setting out, and have walked all the way and have never slept in a bed since I began the journey."

My aunt with every sort of expression but wonder discharged from her countenance, sat on the gravel staring at me, until I began to cry; when she got up in a great hurry, colored me, and took me into the parlour. Her first proceeding there was to unhook a tall press, bring out several bottles, and pour a draught of the contents of each into my mouth. When she had administered these restoratives as I was still quite hysterical, and unable to control my sobs, she put me on the sofa, with a shawl under my head.

After a time she rang the bell. "Janet," said my aunt, when her servant came in, "Go up stairs give the implements to Mr. Dick, and say I wish to speak to him. Mr. Dick was a distant relation of hers when his brother's unkindness had thrown upon the charity of Miss Trotter. He was a good soul, but rather eccentric."

My aunt, with her hands behind her, walked up and down the room, into the parlor, in a state of狂喜 (rapture).

"Mr. Dick! and my aunt—you have heard me mention David Copperfield?"

"Yes," he replied.

"Well, this is his boy, his son. He would be as like his father as it is possible to be, if he was not so like his mother, too."

"His son?" said Mr. Dick. "David's son? Indeed!"

"Yes," pursued my aunt, "and he has done a pretty piece of business. He has run away. Now here you see young David Copperfield and the question I put to you is what shall I do with him?"

What shall we do with him?" said Mr. Dicks, looking
seriously his hand. "What do with him?"

"Yes, we must get him away, and I have
been thinking about it. I will speak very seriously."

"Well, if I was you," said Mr. Dick, "I would say, and
mean what I say. I say, 'Get rid of him.' In contemplation of
the son's conduct, he was silent a moment and then said
briskly, "I should wash him!"

"I am so glad you say that! Come with me, and I will
wash him. Let us get the bath ready. Mr. Dicks was right.
Heat the bath!"

He had scarcely got the bath ready, however, when
to my great distress I heard a knock at the door, and the
butler called out, "Miss Tuppence, come in."

Upon which I ran to the door and opened it. There stood
the butler, holding a tray with a large silver basin in
it, and warming its water over a fire. He had
promised to wash the boy. The boy, however, was not
nearly so clean as he had been, and was the
image of a duckling over that upon the sand. In whover
direction he was going, however, he turned to the
door, from which he was about to pass, and turned
the current of his voice, so that it was quite loud
straight.

"The bath was a great success. We dried him after

the bath being drawn, and the butler put him into the
I was told by the maid servant, for Mr. Dicks, who
had followed when she requested him to attend to my story
which she had heard from me, and had no questions

After this we sat at the window in the drawing room. I
imagined from my aunt's sharp expression, that the more
mysterious it was.

Now, Mr. Dick said my aunt with her grave look
and her forefinger up as before. I am going to ask another
question. Look at this chair!"

"Davidson?" said Mr. Dick with an attentive puzzled face.

"Exactly so," returned my aunt. "What would you do with him, now?"

"Do with David?" said Mr. Dick.

"Ay, " replied my aunt, "with David's son."

"Oh! said Mr. Dick. "Yes, do with it I should put him to bed."

Janet tried to meet with the same complacent triumph that I had remarked before. "Mr. Dick sets us all right. If that's ready, we'll take the car up to it."

My aunt wrote to Mr. Mordstone about me, and in due course he replied to my infernal letter, that he was coming to speak to her himself on the next day. On the next day, I sat at work in the window, and I sat by counting the time restlessly when she gave a sudden alarm of distress, and to my utter consternation and alarm, I saw Miss Murdstone on a side saddle ride deliberately over the scrubbed piece of green, and stop in front of the house, looking about me.

"Going along with you," said my aunt, shaking her head and her fist at the window.

My aunt was exasperated by the impatience with which Miss Murdstone looked about her, and I seized the opportunity to inform her who I was, and that the gentleman now running near the off-door (for the way up was very steep, and he had dropped his hat), was Mr. Mordstone himself.

"I don't care who it is!" said my aunt, still shaking her head, and going trudging on, till we came from the bow window. "I won't be trespass'd upon. I won't allow it. Go away! Janet turn him round. Lead him off!" and I saw, from behind my aunt, a sort of barred lattice piece, in which the doggy stood barking everybody, with his big fear-eggs planted different ways, while Janet tried to pull him round by the bridle. Mr. Mordstone tried to lead him on Miss

Murdstone struck at David with a cane, and so the Misses, who had come to see the engagement, shouted vigorously.

Miss Murdstone, during the latter portion of the contest, had dismounted, and was now waiting with her brother at the bottom of the steps, until my aunt should be at leisure to receive them. My aunt, who, though ruffled by the combat, took no notice of their presence until they were announced by Janet,

"Well, I g'awr'ent," I asked, trembling.

"No sir, and my aunt—C'course not! With which she pushed me into a corner near her, and fenced me in with a hand as if it were a prison or a bar of justice. This position I continued to occupy during the whole interview, and from it I now saw Mr. and Miss Murdstone enter the room.

"Oho!" said my aunt. "I was not aware at first to whom I had the pleasure of addressing. But I don't allow anybody to ride over that turf."

Your recognition is rather awkward to strangers," said Miss Murdstone.

"Is it?" said my aunt.

Mr. Murdstone seemed afraid of a renewal of hostilities, and interposing began,

"Miss Trotwood!"

"I beg your pardon, or—excuse me, if I have done you wrong. You are the Mr. Murdstone who married the widow of my late nephew, David Copperfield, of Blunderstone Rookery."

"I am," said Mr. Murdstone.

Janet said my aunt ringing the bell, "my compliments to Mr. Dick, and I beg him to come down."

Until he came, my aunt sat perfectly upright and stiff, frowning at the wall. When he came, my aunt performed the ceremony of introduction.

Mr. Dick stood among the group with a grave and slightly apprehensive air. My aunt directed her eyes to Mr. Murdstone, who went on,

" This unhappy boy, Miss Trotwood, has been the occasion of much domestic trouble and uneasiness, both during the lifetime of my late dear wife and since. He has a sullen, rebellious spirit, a violent temper, and an untoward, intractable disposition. Both my sister and myself have endeavoured to correct his vices, but ineffectually. I place this boy under the eye of a friend of my own, in a respectable business, it does not please him, he runs away from it, makes himself a vagabond about the country, and comes here, in rage, to appeal to you, Miss Trotwood."

" But about the respectable business first—said my aunt. " If he had been your own boy you would have put him to it, just the same, I suppose?"

" If he had been my brother's own boy—" returned Mrs Murdstone, striking in, " his character I trust, would have been altogether different."

" And now what have you got to say next?" said my aunt.

" Merely this, Miss Trotwood—he returned—" I am here to take David back, to take him back unconditionally, to dispose of him as I think proper, and to deal with him as I think right. Is he ready to go? If he is not—and you tell me he is not—my doors are shut against him henceforth, and yours, I take it for granted, are open to him."

" And what does the boy say?" said my aunt. " Are you ready to go, David?"

I answered " No," and entreated her not to let me go.

" Mr. Dick," said my aunt, " what shall I do with this child?"

Mr. Dick considered, hesitated, brightened, and rejoined, " Have him measured for a suit of clothes directly."

She pulled me towards her and said to Mr. Murdstone,

" You can go when you like, I'll take my chance with the boy. If it's all you say or no, at least I can get a man to

him then, as you have done. But I don't believe a word of it. Good bye."

"You consider yourself present with me of
the child Mr. Dick," said my aunt after they had gone.

I will illustrate what Mr. Brown means by the great loss of David & son."

"Very well," returned my master, "that's settled. I have been thinking over it now. Mr. Pick will settle him Trotwood?"

"Yes to have York Standard Copied and Mr Dick

This I do, to have my name and with
every thing new which may be.

CHAPTER XI

What is a Content Strategy?

"Please you like to sign at Carteret?"

I replied that I should like it very much now it was so
near her.

"Good - and may I ask - " Should you like to go to-morrow?"

I was not surprised by the question of the professor and said, "Yes."

"Good" and his wife come. Just as the day opens
at 1 o'clock tomorrow morning at ten o'clock and pick up
Master Trotwood's clothes to-night.

My aunt who was very different to people I had, drove the grey pony through Lower Town a steady trotter, getting back and stiff like a slate on the road.

"Is it a large school now?" I asked.

"Why, I don't know—said my aunt." We are going to Mr. Warrington's first.

"Does he know you are here?" I asked.

"No, Trot," said my aunt. "He keeps an office."

At length we saw a carriage drawn by two horses, Canterbury bulging out over the road.

When the post-chaise stopped at the door, and my eyes were intent upon the horse, I saw a cadaverous face appear at a small window on the ground floor and quickly disappear. The low arched door then opened, and the face came out. It belonged to a red-haired person, a youth of fifteen, as I take it now, but looking much older whose hair was cropped so close as the closest statue who had hardly any eye-brows and no eye-lashes. He was high-spirited and bony, and had a long, lank, skeleton hand.

"Is Mr. Wickfield at home, Ursula Hoop?" said my aunt.

"Mr. Wickfield's at home this mornin'" said Ursula Hoop, "if you'll please to walk in there." pointing with his long hand to the room he meant.

We got out, and went into his room.

"Well, Miss Trotwood," said Mr. Wickfield, for I soon found that it was he, and that he was a lawyer, and steward of the estates of a rich gentleman of the county, "what wind blown you here? Not an ill wind, I hope?"

"No," replied my aunt. "I have not come for any law."

"This is my grand-nephew," said my aunt.

"Wasn't aware you had one, Miss Trotwood," said Mr. Wickfield.

"I have adopted him," said my aunt. "and I have brought him here, to put him to a school where he may be thoroughly well taught, and well treated."

After a little discussion, he proposed to take my aunt to the best local school that she might see it and judge for herself.

Though the advantages of the school were undeniable my aunt did not approve of any of the boarding houses proposed for me, and it was finally settled that I should stay with Mr. Wickfield for the present.

"Come and see us at the house," said Mr. Wickfield.
We went up to the door of the room, which was prettier from its simplicity than I had expected. It was a room of one room, and there was a small window looking out upon the garden, and another looking out upon the house outside.

Mr. Wickfield tapped at a door in a corner of the panelled wall, and a gal of about my own age came quickly out and kissed him. On her face I saw a pure and sweet expression that I never shall forget.

This was his little housekeeper his daughter Agnes. Mr. Wickfield said Mr. Wickfield had lost a widow since his birth.

She listened to her father, as he told her about me, with a pensant face, and when he had concluded proposed to him that we should go upstairs and see my room. We went together, she before us.

My aunt was as angry as I was in the arrangement made for me, and she left for Dover, without staying to dinner.

Next morning, after breakfast, I entered the school again. I went accompanied by Mr. Wickfield on the eve of my future studies, and was introduced to my new master Doctor Strong.

Whatever I had written, had no slipped away from me to the solid ears of my wife from day to night, that now, when I was examined about what I knew I knew nothing and was put into the lowest form of the school. I was much troubled by my want of book learning.

But there was such an influence in Mr. Wickfield's house, that when I knocked at it, with my new school book under my arm, I began to feel my unbecoming softening away. Agnes had no opportunity of attending school, but was educated carefully at home. She could talk and play on the piano admirably. Once when I brought down my books she asked

into them and showed me what she knew of them and what was the best way to learn and understand them.

Urish was an artless work of Mr. Wickfield, and was of very monstrous habits. Once I found him working hard late at night. "I suppose you are quite a great lawyer?" I said, after looking at him for some time.

"Me Master Copperfield?" said Urish. "Oh no! I'm a very simple fellow. My mother is drewse a very simple person. We live in a simple house. Master Copperfield can have me to be thankful for. My father's former calling was simple. He was a sexton."

I asked Urish if he had been with Mr. Wickfield long.

"I have been with him going on four year. Master Copperfield," said Urish.

"Perhaps you'll be a partner in Mr. Wickfield's business one of these days." I used to make myself agreeable, and it will be. You could not sleep or sleep late Wickfield."

"Oh no, Master Copperfield" returned Urish, raking his beard. "I am much too simple for that! If you would come and see us any afternoon and take a cup of tea at our new dwelling, mother would be no proud of your company as I should be."

"I said I should be glad to come *if you like*."

"One morning I met Urish in the street. He recommended me of the place I had gone to take tea with him and his mother sitting with a sister. But I did not expect you to keep it. Master Copperfield were so very simple."

I really had not yet been able to make up my mind whether I liked Urish or detested him, and I was very doubtful about it still. But I felt it quite as obliged to be supposed I preferred himself.

So at six o'clock that evening which was one of the early office evenings I announced myself as ready, to Urish.

Mother and be proud, indeed he said as we walked away together.

We entered a low, old fashioned room walked straight into from the street and found there Mrs. Heep who was the dead image of Uriah, only short. She received me with the utmost humility, and said "Urnble we are, unble we have been, unble we shall ever be. We know our station and are thankful in it."

Presently they began to talk about aunts, and then I told them about mine, and about fathers and mothers, and then I told them about mine, and then Mrs. Heep began to talk about fathers-in-law, and then I began to tell her about mine, but stopped, because my aunt had advised me to observe silence on that subject. They did just what they liked with me, and wormed things out of me that I had no desire to tell with a certainty I blush to think of.

I had begun to be a little uncomfortable, and to wash myself well out of the visit, when a figure walked in, exclaiming loudly, "Copperfield! Is it possible?"

It was Mr. Micawber who just happened to be passing that way.

I could do no less, under these circumstances, than make Mr. Micawber known to Uriah Heep and his mother, which I accordingly did.

"Makim," said Mr. Micawber to Mrs. Heep, with a bow, "you are very obliging. What are you doing, Copperfield? Still in the wine trade?"

I was excessively anxious to get Mr. Micawber away, and replied with my hat in my hand, and a very red face. I have no doubt, that I was a pupil at Doctor Strong's.

"A pupil?" said Mr. Micawber, raising his eyebrows. "I am extremely happy to hear it!"

"Shall we go and see Mrs. Micawber, sir?" I said to get Mr. Micawber away.

"If you will do her that favour, Copperfield," replied Mr. Micawber, rising.

"Mr. Heep! Good evening Mrs. Heep! Your servant," he said and then walked out with us.

It was a little inn where Mr. Micawber put up and he occupied a small room in it. Here reclined on a small sofa, underneath a picture of a race horse with her head close to the fire, was Mrs. Micawber. She was amazed but very glad to see me.

"I thought you were at Plymouth now," I said to Mrs. Micawber as Mr. Micawber went out.

"My dear Master Copperfield," she replied, "we went to Plymouth (but the truth is there is not wanted in the Custom House). The local influence of my family was quite unworthy to obtain any employment in that department for a man of Mr. Micawber's abilities. In fact that branch of my family which is settled in Plymouth became quite poor, so Mr. Micawber where we had been there a week. That such circumstances we all came back to London. Mr. Micawber was a bit desolate; it used to think that there might be an opening for a turn of his talents in the Medway Coal Trade. Then, as Mr. Micawber very properly said, the first step to be taken clearly was to come and see the Meikins. Which we can do and now I say 'we' Master Copperfield, for I never will," continued Mrs. Micawber with energy. "I never will desert Mr. Micawber!"

"We came," repeated Mrs. Micawber, "and saw the Medway. My opinion of the coal trade on that river is that it may require tact but that it certainly requires capital. Talent, Mr. Micawber has, capital, Mr. Micawber has not. We saw, I think, the greater part of the Medway, and that is my individual conclusion. Being so near here, Mr. Micawber was of opinion that it would be rash not to come on, and see the Cathedral. Firstly on account of its being so well worth seeing, and our never having seen it, and secondly, on account of the great probability of something turning up in a cathedral town. We have been here three days. Nothing has, as yet,

locked up, and we are at present waiting for a remittance from London, to discharge our pecuniary obligations at this hotel."

I expressed my sincere sympathy for them, and when I took my leave of them they both pressed me to come and dine before they went away.

As I was looking out of the window that same evening it surprised me, and made me rather uneasy to see Mr Micawber and Uriah Heep walk past arm in arm. Uriah hardly sensible of the honour that was paid him, and Mr Micawber tame, as I delighted in extending his patronage to Uriah.

I dined with the Micawbers next evening, and I never saw anybody so thoroughly joyful as Mr Micawber was down to the very last instant of the evening when I took a hasty farewell of his wife and his amiable wife. Unconsciously I was not prepared, at seven o'clock next morning, to receive the following summa directrix dated half past nine in the evening, a quarter of an hour after I had left him:

"**MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,**

"The die is cast— it is over. Having the ravages of age with a steady march of march I have now informed you this evening, that there is no hope of the remittance I suffer these circumstances, alike humiliating to endure, humiliating to contemplate, and humiliating to relate. I have discharged the pecuniary debt, &c. contracted at a cost to himself, by giving a note of hand made payable to you on demand, at my residence, Pentonville, London. When it becomes due, it will not be taken up. The rest it is destruction. The belt is snapping and the tree must fall ✓

Let the wretched man who now abhors you my dear Copperfield, be a lesson to you throughout life. He writes with that intention and in that hope (If he could think himself of so much use, one gleam of day might, by possibility, pen-

wrote into the beerless dungeon of his remaining existence—
though his longevity is at present (to say the least of it),
extremely problematical.

This is the last communication, my dear Copperfield,
you will ever receive

"From
"The
"Beggared Outcast,
"Wilkins Micawber."

CHAPTER XII

When I left school my aunt and I had many grave discussions on the calling to which I should be devoted. At last it was settled that I should be a prætor. Miss Betsey took me to the office of Messrs. Sporow and Jorkins in Doctors' Commons. Mr. Sporow informed us that the premium was a thousand pounds. I — I began my mouth's evolution, however whenever I spoke. My aunt took for me a furnished set of chambers in the Strand. I was delighted with the place. Mrs. Trapp was to be a cook, and expressly intimated that she should always consider me as a son. The morning I received here a note from Agnes inviting me to see her at the house of her father's agent, Mr. Water-rook, in Fly-pace, H'born. When I met her she asked me if I had seen Uriah.

"Uriah Heep?" said I. "No. Is he in London?"

"He comes to the office down-stairs every day," retorted Agnes. "He was in London a week before me, I am afraid, on disagreeable business, Trotwood."

"On some business that makes you uneasy Agnes, I see," said I. "What can that be?"

"I believe he is going to enter into partnership with papa."

What did I do? That man followed me, worm himself into such promotion! I cried indignantly.

He has done it after all my trouble! This man is fit to be a master! I said. It is a shameful! He has master'd papa's wages, he's fostered them, and taken advantage of them, until — to say all that I mean is a word — it would suit papa as well as him!

Mr. Winters took us both up to the front door, and when I came I found Uriah Heep at the same time in a sort of black coat and waistcoat. In the meantime, I had knocked with my hand on the door, and called out, "Come in." There were other guests. But there was one who attracted my attention before I had time to notice others — one so familiar as Mr. Tandy's. My mind flew back to Sweet House.

After dinner I was very glad indeed to get upstairs to Agnes, and to talk with her in a corner, and to introduce Tandy to her. He was very dull agreeable, and the same good-natured creature still. As he was obliged to leave early, on account of going away next morning for a month, I had not nearly so much conversation with him as I could have wished, but we exchanged addresses, and promised ourselves the pleasure of another meeting when he should be back to town.

I remained there a little longer, while Agnes was gone. Conversation with Agnes, and hearing her sing, was such a delightful reminder to me of my happy life in the grave old house she had made so beautiful that I could have remained there half the night, but, having no excuse for staying any longer, when the lights of Mr. Winters' rooms were all snuffed out I took my leave very much against my inclination.

Uriah was close behind me when I went down-stairs asking if he might come home to my rooms, and have some coffee.

"No, Master Copperfield," he replied. "I beg your pardon, Master Copperfield, but the other comes so natural,

"I don't like that you should put a constraint upon yourself to ask a kindly person like me to give it up."

"There is no constraint in the case," said I. "Will you come?"

"I should like to, very much," replied Uriah, with a smile.

"Well then come along," said I.

"You have heard something I deserve of a charge in my expectations, Master Copperfield," I should say, Master Copperfield? "observed Uriah.

"Yes," said I, "something."

"Ah! I thought Miss Agnes would work with it!" he quickly returned. "I'm glad to hear Miss Agnes knew about it. Oh thank you, Master Master Copperfield."

I could have thrown him out of the room or the house, for having called me in the presence of nothing but Master Agnes, a woman of wisdom; but I only drank my coffee.

"What a prophet you are showing yourself, Master Copperfield," pursued Uriah. "Do you know what a prophet you have proved yourself to be? Didn't you, rather than saying to me once, that perhaps I should be a partner in Mr. Wickfield's business, and perhaps it might be Wickfield and I? You may not recollect it, but when a person is under Master Copperfield, a person treasures such thoughts up."

"I recollect nothing about it," said I, "though I certainly did not think it very likely then."

"Och! who'd have thought it likely, Master Copperfield!" returned Uriah with most unction. "I am sure I didn't myself. I recollect saying with my own lips that I was much too simple. So I considered myself really and truly."

He sat with his hands clasped on his knee, looking at the fire, as I looked at him.

"But the unldest persons, Master Copperfield," he presently resumed, "may be the instruments of good. I am glad

to think I have set the metropolis of good to Mr. Wickfield, and that I may do so. Oh what a worthy man he is, Master Copperfield! But how important he has been!

"I am sorry to hear it," said I. "I could not help calling, either pointedly or inadvertently,

"Doubtless Master Copperfield deplored this." On all occasions Miss Vere would tell You that remember your own express express to Master Copperfield, that I recollect few words of the day that ever were more fulsome like until now; I thank you for it.

"I am now I am bewitched as before and looked at them and at the two visitors. "There is no joy in that is, and I am as unpoised and honest and happy as ever since the range of Miss Vere I have had a trusting view with regard to Master Copperfield, for I have always overhauled towards you one of the first motives I had the pleasure of telling you of his power there, but have many years for years told Master Copperfield with what a pure affection that I love the ground my Aries walks on!"

(I believe I have often said of seeing the reddish poker out of the fire and racing down the room with it! It went from me with a shock, like a blow from a rifle, but the strange glow of Aries entered by an instant moment of his red flushed skin is repeated in my brain when I looked at him, sitting always as it is now, with a good man's face, and made me sick.) He seemed to swell and grow like a man's face, the roundness of the cheeks of his voice and the strange feeling to which perhaps no man is quite a stranger (and all this had occurred before at some intermediate time) and that I knew what he was going to say next, took possession of me.

(A truly observation of the sense of power that there was in his face did more to bring back to my remembrance the intensity of Aries in its full force, than any effort I could have made.) I naked him, with a better appearance of composure

"I do not have the time to make a picture of you whether he had made his feelings known to Agnes."

"Oh no, Master Copperfield," he replied, "it doth not. Not to any one but you. You see I am only just recovering from my long sickness. I rest a good deal now upon her assistance. It is useful I am to her father for I trust to be very useful to him indeed. Master Copperfield, and how I smooth the way for him and keep him straight. She's so much attached to her father. Master Copperfield, what a lovely thing it is in a daughter, that I take the very care on his account, to be kind to me."

I fathomed the depth of the rascal's whole scheme and understood why he was at home.

CHAPTER XIII

Mr. Spewlow was a well-wisher with one, one of his daughter. After I had been introduced, was invited me to spend a week at Newwood. We left the other day Saturday evening in his phaeton, and soon reached the house at Newwood with a compact garden and a lawn.

"Where is Miss Dora?" said Mr. Spewlow to the servant Dora. "I thought." "What a beautiful name!"

We turned into a room just at hand and I heard a voice say, "Mr. Copperfield, my daughter Dora, and my daughter Dora a confidential friend." It was, no doubt Mr. Spewlow's voice, but I didn't know it and I didn't care who it was. (All was over in a moment. I had fulfilled my destiny. I was a captive and a slave. I forced Dora Spewlow to do it, b'r'f.)

She was more than human to me. She was a Fury, a Sylph!

"I," observed a well-remembered voice when I had bowed and launciated something I have seen Mr. Copperfield before."

The speaker was not Dora. No, the confidential friend, Miss Mardonstone!

I said 'How do you do, Miss Mordstone? I hope you are well?' She answered 'Very well.' I said 'How is Mr. Mordstone?' She replied 'My brother is robust. I am obliged to you.'

Mr. Spew was who I suppose the best surprised to see us recognize each other after so long a time.

'I intended to run,' he said. 'I expected that you and Miss Morden would have separated.'

'Mr. Copperfield and myself went to Miss Mordstone with our respective claims against her. We were exceedingly disappointed. Our solicitor had reported his bill.'

It did not seem to me to be more than this that I had a letter from Pepperty when I was at Dover telling me that Doctor had been a man of the furniture in our old home, and that Mr. and Miss Mordstone had gone away.

We had a quiet Sunday and departed early next morning, and I left the public-house without taking off my hat to him in the street, as she did the last step with Jip, her little dog, in her arms.

'I am delighted to see you,' I said. 'And I do so wish I could call on her next day.'

'You are reading for the bar, Mr. Watertock informed me?' said I.

'Why, yes,' said Traddles, 'I keep the hand slowly over one another.' 'I am reading for the bar. The fact is, I have just begun to keep my terms, after rather a long delay. It's a long time since I was attorney. But the payment of that hundred pounds was a great pull. A great pull! said Traddles, with a wince, as if he had had a tooth out.'

'You were brought up by an uncle?' said I.

'Of course I was!' said Traddles. 'Yes, I had an uncle. He died soon after I left school, and I wasn't provided for.'

'Did you get nothing, Traddles, after all?'

'Oh dear yes!' said Traddles. 'I got fifty pounds

I had never been brought up to any profession and at first I was at a loss what to do for myself. However I began, with the assistance of the son of a professional man to copy law writings. Fortunately, I soon became acquainted with a person in the publishing way, who was getting up an Encyclopedia, and he set me to work, and indeed (sitting at his table) I am at work for him at this minute. So by little and little and not going high, I managed to scrape up the hundred pounds at last. Now, Copperfield, you are so exactly what you used to be with that agreeable face and it's so pleasant to see you that I shan't conceal anything. Therefore you must know that I am engaged. Daphy is a curate's daughter - she of ten, down in Devonshire. She is the dearest girl, but our motto is 'Wait and Hope'. This is the end of my prosing about myself. I get on as well as I can. I don't make much, but I don't spend much. In general I board with the people down-stairs who are very agreeable people indeed. Both Mr and Mrs Micawber have seen a good deal of life and are excellent company.

'Mr and Mrs Micawber! I repeated. Why I am intimately acquainted with them!'

I begged Traddles to ask his landlord to walk up, and Mr Micawber came into the room with a genteel and youthful air. Nothing had yet turned up, with Mr Micawber was in want before. Yet he insisted on my staying to dinner, but I declined the invitation.

Mr Brown once invited me to join a little picnic on the occasion of Dora's birthday. My happiness knew no bounds and I rode to Norwood in the morning. Dora was sitting on a garden seat under a lime tree, upon that beautiful morning, among the butterflies in a white lisp bonnet and a dress of celestial blue!

'You'll be glad to hear, Mr Copperfield,' said Dora when she saw me 'that that cross Miss Murdstone is not here. She

has gone to her brother's marriage and will be away at least three weeks. Isn't that delightful?

I said I was sure it must be delightful to her and all that was delightful to her was delightful to me.

Mr. Spendlow now came out of the house, and we all walked from the lawn towards the carriage, which was getting ready. It was to take the party up town.

I shall never have such a ride again.

I don't know as yet why we went. It was a good spot on a hill, carpeted with soft grass. There were stately trees and bushes, and as far as the eye could see a rich and happy scene.

We all unpacked our bags and employed ourselves in getting dinner ready.

After dinner David and I were drunk. When I drank it I intended to interrupt my conversation for that purpose. I caught David's eye as I bowed to her and I thought it looked promising.

I was happier than ever with the party broken up. I returned to London the same evening but paid another visit to David afterwards and David and I were engaged. I wrote a long letter to Agnes, in which I tried to make her understand what best I could what was during David's wife.

But David stipulated that we were never to be married without her parents' consent and were to keep our secret from Mr. Spendlow for the present.

CHAPTER XIV

About this time Trottius called one day and I enquired how Mr. Micawber was. He said "He is quite well, thank you. I am not living with him at present. He has changed his name to Mortimer in consequence of his temporary engagements and won't come out till after dark and then in spectacles. There was no excuse to put it into our home

for rent. Within a week after execution came in. It broke up the establishment. I have been living in a furnished apartment since then and the Mortimers have been very private indeed. I was shocked to hear this.

What a much greater shock was in store for me. I went out one evening with Frederic and Duggett who had been living with me since Mr. Mortimer's death. When I returned to my sitting room I found my Aunt sitting by a quantity of luggage with her two birds before her and her cat on her knee like a feline Robinson Crusoe drinking tea and Mr. Dick standing thoughtfully at the fire. I was appalled beyond words.

"My dear aunt! and I? Why were we in your pleasure?"

We cordially embraced and Mr. Dick and I clasped each hand.

(I knew my aunt well enough well to know that she had something on her mind and that there was far more trouble in this world than a stranger might have supposed.) I never saw how far she held on me when she thought my attention otherwise occupied.

As I knew she would only speak in her own good time I sat down near her.

"First," said my aunt at last when she had finished her tea, "you will excuse me smoothing down her dress, and wiping her lips. Have you got to be true and obedient?"

"I hope so, aunt."

"Then why, my love, said my aunt looking earnestly at me, "why do you think I prefer to sit upon this property of mine to-night?"

I shrank my head, unable to guess.

"Because," said my aunt, "it's all I have. Because I'm ruined, my dear!"

(If the house, and every one of us, had tumbled out into the river together I could hardly have received a greater shock.)

"Dick knows it," said my aunt, laying her hand suddenly on my shoulder. "I am ruined, my dear Mr. T. All I have in the world is in law costs, except the cottage, and that I have left Janet to let."

I tried to ascertain whether Mr. Dick had any understanding of the causes of this sudden and great change in my aunt's affaire. As I might have expected, he had none at all. (My aunt, on the other hand, was in a composed frame of mind, which was a lesson to all of us.)

I soon came to the conclusion that the first step I ought to take was to try if my attorney could be prevailed upon the premium recovered.

I arrived at the office very early and sat down in my study corner looking up at the sunlight on the opposite chimney pots, and thinking about Dick until Mr. Spenow came in crisp and early.

"How are you, Copperfield?" said he. "Fine morning!"

"Beautiful morning, sir," said I. "Could I say a word to you before you go into Court?"

"By all means," said he. "Come into my room."

I followed him into his room, and he began putting on his coat, and touching himself up before a little glass he had brought inside a closet door.

"I am sorry to say, sir, and I, that I have some rather distressing intelligence from my aunt."

"Not bad news?" "Dear me! Not parlous, I hope?"

"It has no reference to her health, sir," I replied. "She has met with some large losses. In fact, she has very little left, indeed."

"You astounded me, Copperfield!" cried Mr. Spenow.

I shook my head. "Indeed, sir, and I, her affairs are so changed, that I wished to ask you whether it would be possible—at a sacrifice on our part of some portion of the premium, of course," I put in this, on the spur of the moment,

warned by the black expression of his face— to cancel my articles?"

(What it cost me to make this proposal, nobody knows.)

"To cancel your articles, Copperfield? Can't? I am extremely sorry, Copperfield. It is not good to cancel articles for any such reason. It is not a proper and ~~a~~ ^{an} ~~use~~ of proceeding. It is not a convenient precedent at ..."

I saw with sufficient clearness that the recovery of my six hundred thousand pounds was out of the question. In a state of despondency, which I remember with anything but satisfaction, I left the office, and went homeward.

I was trying to familiarise my mind with the worst, and to present to myself the arrangements we should have to make for the future in their sternest aspect, when a hansom-chariot, driving after me, and stopping at my very feet, commanded me to look up.

"Agnes!" I joyfully exclaimed. "Oh my dear Agnes, of all people in the world, what a pleasure to see you!"

"Is it, indeed?" she said, in her odd accents.

The day being very fine, she managed to get out of the chariot. I dismissed the coachman, and she took my arm, and led me (see illustration, to me.)

My aunt had written to her that we had fallen into poverty, and was leaving Dover for good. Agnes had some difficulty to get out, between papa and herself there had been a mutual feeling these many years—indeed it dated from the time when I first came to town—of mutual unhappiness. She was not at all surprised. Her papa was with her—poor dear Heep.

"And now they are partners," said I, "I confess I do!"

"Yes," said Agnes, "they have some business here; and I took advantage of their coming, to come too. You must not think my visit all friendly and disinterested. Trotwood,

for I am afraid I may be easily prejudiced—I do not like to let you go away alone with him.

"Do you know the same old master Mr. Weston still, Agnes?"

Agnes shook her head. "There is such a change at home," said she, "that you would scarcely know the dear old house. They live with us now."

"They?" said I.

Mr. Weston's old master. He sleeps in your old room, and Agnes.

We found Mrs. Weston in a state of sorrow and regret. She told us that her husband was dead, but had not given us the knowledge of Agnes's last bitter "man of business."

Do you remember that in the history? said Agnes.

"I hope it is all over and they won't."

Agnes had given us that last sentence to the Doctor. Her voice was very low, but we were tried directly to the point I knew well. I thought she had had some fear that I might tell her what had happened. My aunt took her hand in hers and smiled.

"Is that all?" repeated my aunt. "Well, yes, that is all except—And she lived happily ever afterwards."

✓ "I say, won't I interpose, that I must do so other-

"I have been to see Mr. Trotwood," said Agnes ~~sighed~~, "that if you had time—

"I have a good deal of time, Agnes. I am always disengaged after four or five o'clock, and I have time early in the morning."

Agnes said, "Doctor Strong has acted on his intention of retiring, and has come to live in London, and he has asked you if you could come. I am sorry. Don't you think he would rather have his favourite old pupil near him than anybody else?"

"Dear Agnes!" said I. "What should I do without you! You are always my good angel. I tell you so. I never think of you in any other light."

I sat down and wrote a letter to the Doctor stating my object, and I appointed to call him next day at ten in the forenoon.

A knock now came at the door.

"I think," said Agnes turning pale, "it's poor Mr. Wickfield who comes."

I opened the door and admitted not only Mr. Wickfield, but also Uriah Heep. I had not seen Mr. Wickfield for some time. I was prepared for a great change in him after what I had heard from Agnes, but his appearance shocked me.

"There was an unwonted radiance upon his face, his eyes were fixed and direct, and there was a tremor trembling in his hand.

"Agnes softly said to him. "Pupil! Here is Miss Trotwood and Trotwood whom you have not seen for a long while! and then he approached and contrived to give my arm his hand, and those hands were certainly with me. As I now looked at Uriah Heep, I saw I seemed to form it self into a most ill-favoured shape. And I say it too. I shrank from him."

"Uriah Heep is a great relief to me," said Mr. Wickfield, in a dull voice. "It's a load off my mind, Trotwood, to have such a partner."

"The red fox need not say all this I knew. What struck me most was, that with the evidence of his native superiority still upon him, he should submit himself to that rawling impersonation of meanness Uriah Heep.)

Heep had an engagement and parted from us. Mr. Wickfield left to Agnes, soon became more like his former self, though there was a settled depression upon him which he never shake off. ✓

CHAPTER XV

Dr Strong kindly appointed me his Secretary. His only regret was that he could not pay me more than £70 a year.

I was pretty busy now, up at five in the morning, and home at nine or ten at night. But I had infinite satisfaction in being so closely engaged, and never walked slowly on any account and felt enthusiastically that the more I tired myself the more I was doing to deserve Dr m.

Burning with impatience to do something to do I went to see Traddles.

Many men, I had heard, had begun life as reporters to newspapers and I asked him how I could qualify myself for the pursuit of reporting law debates in Parliament. Traddles now informed me that a perfect and entire command of the mystery of short-hand writing and reading was about equal in difficulty to the mastery of six languages, and that it might perhaps be attained by dint of perseverance in the course of a few years.

"I am very much obliged to you, my dear Traddles," said I. "I'll begin to-morrow."

"Dear me," said Traddles, "I had no idea you were such a fool."

We were invited once again to Mr Micawber's lodgings and were glad to find this time that Mr Micawber had got rid of his dust and ashes, and that something shiny had turned up at last.

He was arranging to extra for Cast-rouse, and said, "My dear Copperfield, I have entered into arrangements by virtue of which I stand pledged and contracted to our friend Heep, to assist and serve him to the capacity of—and to be his confidential clerk."

I stared at Mr Micawber, who greatly enjoyed my surprise.

"Of my friend Heep," continued Mr Micawber, "who is a man of certain means—"

actual
condition

on the value of my services and on the value of those services I put my faith."

What I particularly request Mr. Micawber to be careful of, is said Mrs. Micawber (that he does not, my dear Mr. Copperfield, in applying himself to this subordinate branch of the law, place it out of his power to rise ultimately, to the top of the tree.)

My dear, observed Mr. Micawber, but glancing inquisitively at Traddles too, "we have time enough before us, for the consideration of those questions."

"that you do not look forward far enough. You are bound, by justice to your family if not to yourself, to take in at a comprehensive glance the extremest point in the horizon to which your abilities may lead you."

Mr. Micawber coughed, and drank his punch with an air of exceeding satisfaction—still glancing at Traddles, as if he desired to have his opinion.

I did not allow my resolution, with respect to the Parliamentary Debates, to cool. I bought an approved scheme of the noble art and mystery of stenography (which cost me ten and sixpence), and plunged into a sea of perplexity that brought me to the verge of despair.

✓ My struggles might have been quite heart-breaking, but for Dora, who was the stay and anchor of my tempest-driven bark. In three or four months, however, I was in a condition to make an experiment on one of our crack speakers in the Commons.

One day, when I went to the Commons as usual, I found Mr. Spenlow in the door way, looking extremely grave, and talking to himself.

Instead of returning my good-morning with his usual affability, he looked at me in a distant, melancholic manner, and coldly requested me to accompany him to a certain coffee-house which had a door opening into the court-yards. I complied in a very un-thriving state, and my host misgave me that he had foisted out of it my darling Louisa.

If I had not guessed this on the way to the coffee-house, I could hardly have failed to know what the matter was when I entered my old upstairs room, and found Miss Mordstone there.

"Please the goodness to show Mr. Copperfield and Mr. Spenlow what you have in your reticule, Miss Mordstone."

I believe it was the old identical steel vessel, the one of my childhood, that shut up like a box. Compressing her lips in sympathy with the snap Miss Mordstone opened it and produced my last letter to Louisa, to me, with expression of devoted affection.

"I believe that is your writing, Mr. Copperfield?" said Mr. Spenlow.

I was very hot, and the voice I heard was very unlike mine when I said, "It is, sir!"

"If I am not mistaken," said Mr. Spenlow, "Miss Mordstone brought a parcel of letters out of her reticule, tied round with the dearest bit of blue ribbon. Those are also from your pen, Mr. Copperfield?"

I took them from her with a most dejected expression.

"No, thank you!" said Mr. Spenlow, coldly as I mechanically offered them back to him. "I will not deprive you of them, Miss Mordstone, be so good as to proceed!"

She narrated how she had snatched my last letter from J.P. who was playing with it, and obtained the packet subsequently from Dora who was taxed with having many more letters in her possession. Mr. Spenlow told me that the correspondence must come to an end; or he would disinherit Dora. He gave me a week to think over the matter.

When I got to the office and sat at my desk, in my own particular nook, thinking of the earthquake that had taken place so abruptly, and in the bitterness of my spirit driving Jim, I fell into such a state of torment about Dora, that I wished I did not take up my hat and rush unwillingly to Norwood. The idea of their frightening her, and hearing her cry, and my not being there to comfort her, was so exciting; that it impelled me to write a wild letter to Mr. Spenlow, enclosing him not to visit, or hear the consequences of my awful destiny. This letter I sealed and laid upon his desk before he returned, and when he came in, I saw him, through the half-opened door of the room, take it up and read it.

He said nothing about it all the morning, but before he went away in the afternoon, he called me in, and told me that he believed he was an indifferent father (as indeed he was), and I might spare myself any solicitude on Dora's account.

(CHAPTER XV)

An unexpected calamity now befalls Dora. Mr. Spenlow dies suddenly while driving home from town. She is overwhelmed with grief and goes to live with her two aunts—Miss Lavinia and Miss Carrison—two daughters of Mr. Spenlow. They refuse to receive so that Dora and I are poor-laily engaged, but agree to let me visit her twice a week.

(Once again, let me pause upon a memorable period of my life.)

I have come legally to man's estate. I have attained the
age of twenty-one.

(I have tamed that savage stenographic mystery. I make
it ride like a pony at, and am just now engaged in
reporting the debates in Parliament for a morning newspaper.)

I have taken with fear and trembling to authorship. I
wrote a little something, in secret, and sent it to a magazine,

and it was published in the magazine. Now I am regularly paid for my articles. Altogether I am well off.

We have just moved to a pleasant little house. Mr. Murdstone however (who has sold the house at Dore to good advantage), is still more than ~~far~~^{far} worse at hand. What does this ~~friend~~? My marriage? Yes!

Yes! I am going to be married to Dora! Miss Lavinia and Miss C. are to have room there too. So they arrive at the house of Dora's parents in due course and Fraddles presents her, with great pride to us as well as to Agnes whom I have brought from the Citterbury coach. Agnes has a great liking for Fraddles and it is capital to see them meet. I fetch my coat from her trousseau. We drive to the church in an open coach. The rest is all a mere ~~delusion~~^{delusion} - a dream of that coming in with Dora of our kneeling down together side by side - of Dora's shrinking less and less, of the ~~sorrows~~ being got through quickly and gravely of my walking so proudly and lovingly down the aisle with my sweet wife upon my arm.

The honeymoon being over I found myself sitting down in my own small house with Dora. But we felt our inexperience of house-keeping, and had our little quarrels. Whenever I had unknowingly wounded Dora's soft little heart, she was so pathetic in her sobbing and bewailing that I felt miserable. But my little wife was in such affliction when she thought that I was annoyed, and in such a state of joy when she found that I was not, that my misery quickly vanished.

"These are early days, Trot," my aunt once observed, "and Rome was not built in a day, nor in a year. You have chosen freely for yourself - a cloud passed over her face for a moment, I thought - and you have chosen a very pretty and a very affectionate creature. It will be your duty, and it will be your pleasure too, to estimate her (as you chose her) by

the qualities she has ~~had~~ not by the qualities she may not have. The latter you must develop in her if you can.

"I am very sorry," Dora once said. "Will you try to teach me, Doady?"

"I must teach myself first, Dora, and I—I am as bad as you."

"Ah! But you can help—she returned—"and you are a clever, clever man!"

"Nonsense!" said I.

"I wish," resumed my wife, after a long silence—that I could have gone down into the country for a whole year and lived with Agnes!"

"Why so?" I asked.

"I think she might have improved me—and I think I might have learned from her," said Dora.

"All in good time."

"Will you call me a name? I want you to call me—inquired Dora without moving.

"What is it?" I asked with a smile.

"It's a stupid name," she said, closing her eyes for a moment. "Child-wife."

(Thus it was that I took upon myself the care and concern of our life, and had no partner in them.) We lived much as before, in reference to our surroundings being the same—indeed—but I had got used to them, and Dora, I was pleased to see, was seldom vexed now. She was bright and cheerful in the old childlike way, loved me dearly, and was happy with her old tricks. I had no suspicion then that her health was failing. ✓

CHAPTER XVII

I received one morning a letter, dated Canterbury, from Mr. Micawber, in which he asked me for an interview near the

Kings Bench pres., I read the letter over several times, making due allowance for Mr. Micawber's fit style of composition, and for the extraordinary rash with which he set down and wrote his letters on all occasions and impossible occasions; I still believed that some very important day hidden at the bottom of his pocket-book was to come. My impression was confirmed when I called Traddles who had received a letter from Mrs. Micawber containing a sort of mental message from which her husband had been suffering of late. We therefore agreed to see him punctually at the appointed hour.

"Oh you are in low spirits, Mr. Micawber," said Traddles, when we met him.

"I am not," interposed Mr. Micawber.

"I hope," said Traddles, "it is not because you have received a dubious bill from the law—for I am a lawyer myself, you know."

Mr. Micawber answered not a word.

"How is our friend Hoop? Mr. Micawber?" said I after a silence.

My dear Copperfield, returned Mr. Micawber, bursting into a state of much exasperation, and turning pale. "You will allow me (as a private individual) to do so; you will, I suppose, understand the strict virginity of my profession, especially."

"Take up," continued Mr. Micawber impatiently, "down a turning for upon my soul in my present state of mind I am not equal to that!"

We walked on arm in arm and went to my wife's house rather than to those bairns of Dora's and mine. Miss Trotwood presented herself on being sent for and welcomed Mr. Micawber with gracious cordiality. Mr. Micawber kissed her hand and retired to the window.

Madam said Mr Micawber after a few minutes. I wish I had told the honest folks like me you at an earlier period. I was not aware the wreck was at present to be.

'I hope Mrs Micawber and your family are well, sir,' said my aunt.

Mr Micawber inclined his head. 'They are as well as us,' he despatched, observed after a pause. 'as A and Out at can ever hope to be.'

'Lord bless you, sir!' exclaimed my aunt in her abrupt way. 'What are you taking about?'

'The substance of my family drama returned Mr Micawber, 'triumphant in the balance. My today.'

Here Mr Micawber probably left off.

Mr Micawber said I what is the matter? Pray speak out. You are going frantic.'

'Among friends sir,' replied Mr Micawber and all his bad reserved came breaking out of him. Good heavens it is general & because I am among friends that it comes to mind is what it is. What is the matter gentleman? What is not the matter? Why is the matter house is not the matter, decent in ~~frank~~, open frank, the matter, and the name of the whole ~~strange~~ or ~~mess~~ is Hemp!'

My aunt clapped her hands and we all started up as if we were ~~possessed~~.

I never saw a man so hot in my life. I tried to calm him that we ought come to something rational, but he got hotter and hotter and wouldn't bear a word.

'I'll put my hand in no man's hand' said Mr Micawber, gasping, puffing and nothing to that degree that he was like a man fighting with his water. 'until I have blown to fragments—the—~~s~~—the serpent—Hemp! (I'll partake of no one's hospitality until I have—a—moved Mount Vesuvius—to erupt upon a the ~~want~~ land ~~the~~ ~~of~~ Hemp!)

With the last repetition of the mag' word that had kept him going at all, Mr Micawber rushed out of the house; leaving

DAVID COPPERFIELD

in a state of ex-tent, hope and wonder that reduced us to a condition little better than his own. Immediately after a note was brought to me in which Mr. Micawber requested us to meet him at his old hotel in Canterbury, where he proposed to expose the misdeeds of Illeg. A company we four, that is to say my son, Mr. Dick, Traddles and I, went down to Canterbury and Mr. Micawber appeared at the hotel when we had sat down to breakfast.

'Now sir,' said my son to Mr. Micawber, 'are we put off for always? we are ready for Miss Wickfield or anything else as soon as you please.'

'Madam,' returned Mr. Micawber, 'I trust you will shortly witness an erection. Mr. Traddles I have your permission, I believe, to mention here that we have been in communication together?"

'It is undoubtedly the fact,' Copperfield, said Traddles, to whom I looked in surprise.

'Mr. Copperfield,' continued Mr. Micawber, 'I would beg to be allowed a start of five minutes by the clock, and then to receive the present company inquiring for Miss Wickfield at the office of Winkle and Illeg., whose Biographer I am.' Very truly yours,

With this to my infinite surprise he nodded us all in a comprehensive bow, and disappeared.

When the time expired, we all went out together to the old house.

We found Mr. Micawber at his desk, in the turret office on the ground floor either writing, or pretending to write, hard. The large office-ruler was stuck into his waistcoat.

'Is Miss Wickfield at home?' said I.

'Mr. Winkle is unwell in bed, sir, of a rheumatic fever,' he returned, 'but Miss Wickfield I have no doubt will be happy to see old friends. Will you walk in, sir?'

He conducted us to the common room of the first room I had

spurred in that house—and flinging open the door of Mr. Wickfield's former office, said in a roar as you see,

Miss Trotwood! Mr. David Copperfield! Mr. Thomas Traddles, and Mr. Dombey!

Urnah was astonished to see us. "Well I am sure," he said, "this is indeed an unexpected pleasure!"

A tea was taken here in by Mr. Micawber. In the meanwhile, some faint signs passed between Mr. Micawber and Traddles, and Traddles, we observed except he went out.

"Don't wait, Micawber," said Urnab.

Mr. Micawber, with his hand upon the handle of the door, stood erect before the door, most magnificently, being one of the tall w'men, and that man has got up."

"What are you waiting for?" said Urnab. "Micawber! did you hear me tell you not to wait?"

"Yes!" replied the answer of Mr. Micawber.

"Then why do you wait?" said Urnab.

"Because I am short-changed," replied Mr. Micawber with a burst.

Urnab's cheeks lost colour, and an unusual paleness, still faintly tinged by his previous red, crept over them.

"You are a dissipated fellow, as all the world knows," he said, with an effort at a smile; "and I am afraid you'll cause me to get rid of you. I thought I had you completely—
understanding

"If there is a second rel on this earth!" said Mr. Micawber, suddenly breaking out again with the almost voice, "with whom I have already talked too much—but remember, I am no—Herr!"

Urnab looked as if he had been struck a blow. His eyes only gazed upon us with the darkest and wickedest expression that his face could wear, he said, in a hoarse voice,

"Oho! This is a conspiracy! You have met here by appointment! Now, take care. You'll make nothing of this Miss Trotwood, you had better stop this Miss Wickfield if you have any right to her, you old rascal!"

place I'll run him if you do. Now, come (I have got some of you under the harrow) Think twice, you Micawber, if you don't want to be crushed. Were a mother?" he said to Trotwood, who was about to close the door of Blunderbuss's room down the better for his doings in a person's own house! "

"Mrs. Deep is here sir," said Trotwood returning with that worthy mother of a worthy son. "I have taken the liberty of inviting myself grown up to her."

"Why do you make yourself grown?" reflected Uriah. "Are what I you want to do?"

"I am to exert my friend of Mr. Wickfield sir, and Trotwood is a supposed business-like way." "And I have a power of attorney from him in his pocket to act for him in all matters." *Mr. Wickfield.*

"The old man has drunk himself into a stage of dotage," said Uriah, turning up one than before — and it has been got from him by fraud!"

"Something has been got from him by fraud I know," returned Trotwood gravely, "as I know you are Deep. We will leave that question if you please, to Mr. Micawber."

"Ugh!" Mrs. Deep burst, with an execrable gesture.

"You had your tongue in there," he retorted, "least said, best answered."

"But, my Ugh!"

"Will you bind your tongue no mother and leave it to us."

Mr. Micawber whose impetuosity I had restrained thus far with the greatest difficulty now burst forward, drew the ruler from his breast (apparently as a defensive weapon), and produced from his pocket a fowling-piece document folded in the form of a large letter. Opening this packet, with his old flourish, and glancing at the contents, as if a cherished artistic admiration of their style of composition he began to read as follows —

"Dear Miss Trotwood and gentleman,

In addressing before you to deprecate misery the most obvious consideration that has ever entered my mind is no consideration for myself. The writer from my side of pecuniary distress to which I have been subjected, I have never been the sport and toy of fortune, — such is my Want, Despair and Madness have, notwithstanding my stability, been the other parts of my career.

In an examination of Insanity, Want, Despair, and Madness, I consider the former as the most important. God would turn it, to His own advantage, if conducted over the appearance of Weakness and Helplessness, which I am here about.

The earliest of these three in connection of which I entered into the service of Herp. Mr. November however proved better than was anticipated by the author of my warrant. I said the first time he came to me and as per usual (he was at the time in the service of my professor) (I think) No, I can't do it, I don't see cause to assist in this. He said, "I am your only advocate, I have no money, and you are the only man I can depend upon." I said, "No, I can't do it, I have been promised to another."

I said, "I can see you are well informed, and I have nothing to do with it." I said, "No, as Mr. W. told me, Mr. W. will not let me keep in his office and that is the reason people say yet that in the whole, the Private Herp was professedly kind and generous, and of talents exceeding for, that much deserved preference."

Stimulated by the great number with whom I had been so long and appearing more fit without to whom I will briefly refer as Miss W — I entered on, a not unuseful task of clandestine investigation, professed now to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief over a period exceeding twelve calendar months. ✓

My charges against—Heep are as follows—

First—When Mr. W.'s faculties and memory for business became weakened, he obtained Mr. W.'s signature under such circumstances to documents of importance, representing them to be other documents of no importance. He induced Mr. W. to empower him to draw out, thus, one particular sum of ten thousand dollars, amounting to two thousand pounds sterling, and employed it to meet proposed business charges and demands which were either already provided for, or had never really existed."

"Ury, Ury! Be quiet, and make terms, my boy!" screamed Mrs. Heep.

"Mother!" Heep retorted, "will you keep quiet? You're in a frigat, and don't know what you say or mean. Urrr!" he repeated, looking at me, with a snarl. "I've wanted some of 'em for pretty long time back, umble as I was!"

Mr. Micawber, gently adjusting his glass in his crust, presently proceeded with his composition:

"Second—Heep has, on several occasions, to the best of my knowledge, information and belief, successfully forged, to various entries, books and documents, the signature of Mr. W., and has distinctly done so in one instance, capitals of proof by me."

"Ury, Ury! and the other?" be quoth, and made terms. "I know my son will be unmercifully punished, if you'll give him time to think. Mr. Copperfield, I'm sure you know that he was born a very unmerciful son!"

Mr. Micawber continued:

"Third—And last—Mr. W. has been for years indebted and paid debt in every conceivable manner, to the pecuniary agent in chief of the ~~bank~~, ^{firm}, false—and ~~partner~~—Heep. His last act, completed in a few months since, was to induce Mr. W. to execute a requirement of his share in the partnership, and even a bid of sale on the very furniture of his

house, in consideration of a certain amount to be well and truly paid by—Herr

I have now enclosed. It ~~now~~ remains for me to substantiate those statements and then with my wife started family, to a sum from the end now in which we appear to be an innumerable sum.

Remaining always, &c. &c.,

WILKINS MICAWBER

Much interest and anxiety employing myself Mr. Micawber took up his letter, and handed it with a bow to my aunt, as if nothing she might have to say

There was a ~~lock~~ I had noticed on my front door some ago, upon sale in the town. The key was in it. A hasty inspection caused me to strike Uriah, and with a glance at Mr. Micawber, he went to it and threw the door ~~wide~~ open. It was empty!

"What do you want?" said I with a frightful face.
"Some of the ~~silver~~ in the safe!"

Mr. Micawber turned himself with the elder. "I did, when I got the key from you as important a little earlier—and missed it this morning."

"Don't be uneasy, ~~and~~ brother! They have come into my possession. I won't take ~~one~~ of them under the authority I mentioned."

"You never stated ~~as to~~ ~~what~~ ~~you~~ ~~wanted~~ ~~it~~!" cried Uriah.

Under such circumstances answered Traddles, "yes."

What was my astonishment when I beheld my aunt who had been prudent's quiet and attentive, make a dart at Uriah Heep, and seize him by the collar with both hands!

"You know what I want?" said my aunt.

"A strait-waistcoat," said he.

"No, no, no project! I repeat my visit." "Aches, my dear, as long as I live, it had been really made away with

"I want you to give him up to me,
to be sent to prison, or to be sent to
anywhere else I like. This boy is
answerable for it, and I'll have it! Trot, come and take it
away from him!"

I hastened to put myself between them, and to assure her
that we would all take care that he should make the utmost
restitution of everything he had wrongly got.

During the last few minutes Mrs. Hoep had been encouraging
to her son to be "unblameable", and had been going down on
her knees to all of us in succession, and making the wildest
promises. Her son set her down in his chair.

"What must be done?" said Traddles. "Is this? First, the
deed of relinquishment, that we have heard of, must be given
over to me now here. Hoep, you must prepare to disgorge
all that your majority has become possessed of, and to make
restoration to the rest furthering. All the partnership books and
papers must remain in my possession and your books and
papers, all money, debts and securities, of both kinds. In
short, everything here."

"Most likely I don't know that," said Uriah. "I must
have time to think about that."

"Certainly," replied Traddles, "but, in the meanwhile,
and until everything is done to our satisfaction, we shall main-
tain possession of these things, and beg you in short, compel
you to keep your own room, and hold no communication with
any one."

"I won't do it!" said Uriah, with an oath.

"Mincing Jail is a safer place of detention," observed
Traddles. "Copperfield, will you go round to the Guildhall,
and bring a couple of officers?"

Here, Mrs. Hoep broke out again, crying on her knees to
Agnes to interfere in their behalf, exclaiming that he was very
harmless, he was a coward from head to foot, and allowed
himself to be led into sin by his selflessness and naivete.

"Mother told your nurse. Well! Let em have that deed. Go and fetch it!"

She soon returned, not only with the deed, but also with the box in which it was, where we found a banker's book and some other papers that were afterwards serviceable.

"Good!" said Trotty, when this was brought. "Now, Mr. Heep, you can retire to think."

Mr. Micawber's song was finished, and he returned home, followed by Mr. Dick, my aunt and myself. We were all very grateful for what he had done. As this meant the loss of his appointment under Heep, our hearts were filled with sympathy for his family. My aunt now suggested that he should migrate to Australia to try his luck.

Capital, madam—capital—urged Mr. Micawber gloomily.

"That is the jingle I may say the only jingle, my dear Mr. Copperfield," mounted his wife.

"Capital—could my aunt? But you are doing in a great service—have done in a great service, I may say, for surely much will come out of the fire—and what could we do for you that would be half so good as to lend the capital?"

"I could not receive it as a gift," said Mr. Micawber, full of fire and animation, "but if a sufficient sum could be advanced, say at five per cent interest per annum upon my personal liberty—say my notes of hand, at twelve, eighteen, and twenty-four months respectively, to allow time for something to turn up—"

"Could I be? Can be and shall be on your own terms," returned my aunt, "if you say the word."

"There is but one question, my dear cousin. I could wish to ask," said Mrs. Micawber. "The climate—I believe—is healthy?"

"Finest in the world!" said my aunt.

"Just so," returned Mrs Micawber. "Then my question is—(Now, are the circumstances of the country such, that a man of Mr Micawber's abilities would have a fair chance of rising in the world since?) I will not say at present might he aspire to be Governor, or anything of that sort, (but would there be a reasonable opening for his talents to develop themselves—that would be simply sufficient—and find their own expansion?)

"No better opening anywhere," said my aunt, "for a man who conducts himself well and is industrious."

"For a man who conducts himself well," repeated Mrs Micawber with her clearest business manner, "and is industrious. Precisely. It is evident to me that Australia is the legitimate sphere of action for Mr Micawber."

"I entertain the conviction, my dear madam," said Mr Micawber, "that it is under existing circumstances the land, the only land, for myself and family and that something of an extraordinary nature will turn up in that shore."

This conviction gradually gained ground and Mr Micawber prepared to sail for Australia with his family at the earliest opportunity.



CHAPTER XVIII

So after this David and a few friends and I returned to London gradually. I did, and I never left my child wife again in the night with her friend Dora. But I could not shut out a clustering shadow of belief that she might be separated. At last they told me everything and I knew that Dora would soon leave me. At her earnest desire I sent for Agnes with whom she spent her last moments. It was Agnes that I learnt that I was ill company with her.

I came to think that the Future was walled up before me, but the energy and action of my life were at an end, that I

never could find any trace but in the grave) I was to go abroad. That seemed to have been determined among us from the first on the advice of Agnes whose spirit pervaded all we thought. I waited only for what Mr. Micawber called the 'final pulverisation of Heep,' and for the departure of the emigrants for Australia. Soon we came to Canterbury to meet Traddles.

Heep was held in safe keeping by Traddles and later by Dick, while an investigation into his fraudulent transactions proceeded. Mr. Micawber greatly helped Traddles in examining the financial condition of Mr. Wickfield which was really chaotic.

"Now let me see," said Traddles, looking among the papers one day. "Having counted our funds, and reduced to order a great mass of unintentional confusion in the first place and of wilful confusion and falsification in the second, we take it to be clear that Mr. Wickfield might now wind up his business, and his agency trust, and exhibit no deficiency or defalcation whatever."

"Oh thank Heaven!" cried Agnes fervently.

"But" said Traddles, "the surplus that would be left as his means of support—and I suppose the house to be sold, even in saying this—would be so small, not exceeding in all probability some hundreds of pounds, that perhaps, Miss Wickfield, it would be best to consider whether he might not retain his agency of the estate to which he has so long been receiver."

"I have considered it, 'Trutwood,'" said Agnes, looking to me. "and I feel that it ought not to be, and must not be. I have always aspired, if I could have released him from the toils in which he was held to render back some little portion of the love and care I owe him, and to devote my life to him. It has been for years, the utmost height of my hopes. To take our future on myself will be the next great happiness—the next to his release from all trust and responsibility—that I can know."

"Have you thought how? Ames?" I said.

"Often! I am not afraid dear Trotwood. I am certain of success. So many people know me here, and think kindly of me, that I am certain. Don't mistrust me. Our wants are not many. If I rent the dear old house, and keep a school, I shall be useful and happy."

"Next, Miss Trotwood!" said Traddles. "That property of yours?"

"Well, sir," sighed my aunt. "All I have got to say about it is that if it's gone I can bear it; and if it's not gone I shall be glad to get it back."

"It was originally I think eight thousand pounds, Consols?" said Traddles.

"Right!" replied my aunt.

"I can't account for more than five," said Traddles, with an air of perplexity.

"—thousand, do you mean?" inquired my aunt, with uncommon composure "or pounds?"

"Five thousand pounds," said Traddles.

"It was all there was," returned my aunt. "I sold three, myself. One I paid for your articles, Trot, my dear, and the other two I have by me."

"Then I am delighted to say," cried Traddles, beaming with joy, "that we have recovered the whole money!"

"How so, sir?" exclaimed my aunt.

"You believed it had been misappropriated by Mr. Wickfield?" said Traddles.

"Of course I did," said my aunt, and was therefore easily silenced.

"And indeed," said Traddles, "it was sold, by virtue of the power of management he held from you, but I needn't say by whom sold or on whose actual signature. It was afterwards pretended to Mr. Wickfield by that rascal,—and proved, too, by figures that he had possessed himself of the

money (on general instructions, he said to keep other deficiencies and difficulties from the light.)

"Hm!" said my aunt, knitting her brows thoughtfully, and glancing at Agnes. "And what a become of him?"

"I don't know. He left here," said Traddles, "with his mother, who had been clamouring, and beseeching, and discoursing, the whole time. They went away by one of the London night coaches, and I know no more about him."

"Do you suppose he has any money, Traddles?" I asked.

"Oh dear, yes, I should think so!" he replied, shaking his hand, seriously. "I should say he must have pocketed a good deal in one way or other. But I think you would find, Copperfield, if you had an opportunity of observing his course, that money would never keep that man out of mischief."

Soon after the Micawbers' departure for Australia, I left England, and for many months travelled with an ever darkening cloud upon my mind. Sometimes, I proceeded restlessly from place to place, stopping nowhere; sometimes, I lingered long in one spot. I had no purpose, no sustaining soul within me, anywhere.

I was now in a valley in Switzerland. I had come out of Italy, over one of the great passes of the Alps, and had since wandered with a guide among the byways of the mountains. If those awful solitudes had spoken to my heart, I did not know it. I had found sublimity and wonder in the dread heights and precipices, in the roaring torrents, and the wastes of ice and snow, but as yet, they had taught me nothing else.

One evening I opened a packet of letters which had been awaiting me for some time, and read the writing of Agnes. She was happy and useful, and was prospering as she had hoped.

She gave me no advice, she urged no duty on me, she only told me, in her own fervent manner, what her trust in me was. She knew, (she said,) how such a nature as mine would turn affliction to good.

I read her letter many times. I wrote to her before I slept. I told her that I had been in sore need of her help, that without her I was not safe. I never had been what she thought me.

I resolved to remain away from home for some time longer, to settle myself for the present in Switzerland, to resume my pen; to work.

I worked early and ate patiently and hard. I wrote a story with a purpose growing not remotely out of my experience and sent it to Traddles. He arranged for its publication very advantageously for me, and the tidings of my growing reputation began to reach me from travellers whom I encountered by chance. After some rest and change, I felt to work in my old robust way on a new family which took strong possession of me. As I advanced in the execution of this task, I thought of returning home.

CHAPTER XIX

I arrived in London, to a winter's autumn evening. It was dark and raining, and I saw more fog and mud in a minute than I had seen in a year.

For some changes in the fortunes of my friends, I was prepared. My aunt had long been re-established at Dover, and Traddles had begun to get into some little practice at the Bar, in the very first term after my departure. He had chambers in Gray's Inn, now.

"Good God!" cried Traddles, looking up as I stepped into his room. "It's Copperfield!" and rushed into my arms, where I held him tight.

"All well, my dear Traddles?"

"All well, my dear dear Copperfield, and nothing but good news!"

We cried with pleasure both of us.

"To think, said Traddles, 'that you should have been so sorry mang me, as we must have been my dear old boy, and not at the ceremony!'

"What ceremony, my dear Traddles?"

"Why, my dear Copperfield," said Traddles, "standing him half upright with both hands upon them putting his hands on my knees, 'I am married!'"

"'Married!' I cried joyfully.

"Lord bless you, you said Traddles. By the Rev. Horatio Nibby, down in Devonshire. Why, my dearest boy, where behind the wainscot, look here!"

To my uttermost the dearest girl in the world ~~saw~~ at that same instant could not be kept from her place of concealment.

"It was a scene I could not keep dwelling on with pleasure for a long time after I left. Traddles' happiness often led me to think so much of the associations and separations that had marked my life. The memory of my miserable childhood was one day unexpectedly revived.

Mr Chipp, the Doctor who attended my mother in her first confinement, had left Blunderstone six or seven years ago, and I had never seen him since. I now met him one day placidly perusing the newspaper in a London coffee-room with his little head on one side and a glass of warm sherry negus at his elbow.

I walked up to where he was sitting and said "How do you do, Mr Chipp?"

"Dear me sir!" said Mr Chipp, surveying me with his head on one side. "And it's Mr Copperfield is it? Well, sir I think I should have known you if I had taken the liberty of looking more closely at you."

"I was aware that you sustained a bereavement sir some time ago," continued Mr Chipp. "I heard it from your father-in-law's sister. Very decided character there sir?"

"Why, yes, said I, decided enough. Where did you see her, Mr. Chitlip?"

"Are you not aware, sir," returned Mr. Chitlip, with his pleasant smile, "that your father-in-law is again a neighbour of mine?"

"No," said I.

"He is indeed, sir," said Mr. Chitlip. "Married, a young wife. I think part with a very good little property, poor thing."

"I was aware of his having married again. Do you attend the family?" I asked.

"Not regularly. I have been invited in," he replied.

Strong physical development of the organ of firmness, in Mr. Murdstone and his sister, sir.

"And the brother and sister are pursuing their old course, are they?" said I.

"I must say they are very severe, sir, both as to this life and the next."

"The next will be regulated without much reference to them, I dare say," I returned, "what are they doing as to this?"

Mr. Chitlip shook his head, stirred his negus, and sipped it.

"She was a charming woman, sir!" he observed in a plaintive manner.

"The present Mrs. Murdstone?"

"A charming woman indeed, sir," said Mr. Chitlip, "so amiable, I am sure, as it was possible to be! Mrs. Chitlip's opinion is that her spirit has been entirely broken since her marriage, and that she is all but melancholy mad. And the ladies observed Mr. Chitlip, timorously, 'are great observers, sir!'"

"I suppose she was to be subdued and broken to their detestable mould. Heaven help her!" said I. "And she has been!"

"Well, sir, there were violent quarrels at first, I assure you," said Mr. Chilip. "But she is quite a shadow now. Would it be considered forward if I was to say to you, sir, in confidence, that since the sister came to help the brother and sister between them have nearly reduced her to a state of imbecility?"

"I told him I could easily believe it."

"I have no hesitation in saying," said Mr. Chilip, fortifying himself with another sip of negus, "between you and me, sir, that her mother died of it—or that tyranny, gloom and worry have made Mrs. Mardstone nearly imbecile. She was a lively young woman, sir, before marriage, and their gloom and austerity destroyed her. They go about with her now more like her keepers than her husband and sister-in-law." That was Mrs. Chilip's remark to me, only last week. And I assure you, sir, the ladies are great observers. Mrs. Chilip—he proceeded in the calmest and sweetest manner—quite electrified me by pointing out that Mr. Mardstone sets up no image of himself and calls it the Divine Nature. Mr. Mardstone delivers public addresses sometimes, and it is said—in short, sir, it is said by Mrs. Chilip—that the darker tyrant he has lately been, the more ferocious is his doctrine.

"I believe Mrs. Chilip to be perfectly right," said I.

Mrs. Chilip does go so far as to say " pursued the meekest of little men much encouraged," that what such people miss all their religion is a vent for their bad humours and arrogance."

I left for Dover next morning. My aunt and I, when we were left alone, talked far into the night. She told me how the emigrants never wrote home, otherwise than cheerfully and hopefully, and how Mr. Micawber had various remitted divers small sums of money, on account of those "pecuniary liabilities," in reference to which he had been so business-like as between man and man.

And when Trot said my aunt, patting the back of my head as we sat in our old way before the fire, 'when are you going over to Canterbury?'

I said, 'I am to go to-morrow morning,
but unless you will go with me.'

'No,' said she, 'and in her short abrupt way, 'I mean to stay where I am.'

"Then, I should ride," I said.

I rode away alone, in the musing for the scenes of my old school days.

The well-trodden road was soon traversed, and I came into the quiet streets where every stone was a boy a book to me. I went on foot to the old house, and requested the maid who admitted me to tell Miss Wickfield that a gentleman who waited on her from a friend abroad, was there, and I was shown up the grave and staircase into the unchanged drawing room. Everything was as it used to be in the happy time.

The opening of the little door made me start and turn. Her beautiful serene eyes met mine as she came towards me. She stopped and laid her hand upon her bosom.

"Agnes! my dear girl! I have come too suddenly upon you."

No, no! I am so rejoiced to see you, Trotwood!"

"Dear Agnes, the happiness it is to me, to see you once again!"

She was so true, she was so beautiful, she was so good.—I owed her so much gratitude, she was so dear to me, that I could find no utterance for what I felt. I tried to bless her, tried to thank her, tried to tell her (as I had often done in letters, what an influence she had upon me, but all my efforts were in vain. My love and joy were dumb.

"And you, Agnes," I said, by-and-bye, "Tell me of yourself. You have hardly ever told me of your own life, in all this space of time!"

"What should I tell?" she answered with her radiant

stone. Papa is well. You see us here quiet in our own house, our anxiety set at rest, our home restored to us, and knowing that for Traddles you know all.

Agnes had to leave me for a while in order to attend to her duties at the shop she had been keeping.

Soon I met Mr. Wickfield who had come home from a garden he had out of town where he now employed himself almost every day. He seemed but the shadow of his handsome picture in the wall. As I rode back in the lone night the wind going by me like a restless狂人, I feared Agnes was not happy. And I was not happy.

CHAPTER XX

I have a letter from old Creakle here and I one day to Traddles in his London house.

From Creakle the hoolighter?" exclaimed Traddles.
"No!"

Among the persons who were attracted to me in my rising fame and fortune," said I, looking over my letters, "and who discovered that I was always much attracted to me, is the self-same Creakle. He is not a hoolighter now, Traddles. He is retired. He is a Middlesex Magistrate.

I thought Traddles might be surprised to hear it, but he was not so at all.

I continued. He writes to me here, that he will be glad to show me a system—the only true system of prison discipline, the only unchallengeable way of making sinners and casting converts and penitents which, you know, is by solitary confinement. What do you say?

To the system?" inquired Traddles looking grave.

No. To my accepting the offer and your going with me?"

I don't object," said Traddles.

"Then I'll write to say so. You remember our treatment at his bands?"

"Perfectly," said Traddles.

"Yes, if you'll read his letter, you'll find he is the tenderest of men to prisoners convicted of the whole calendar of felonies, and I, (though I can't find that his tenderness extends to any other class of created beings.)

We arranged the time of our visit, and I wrote accordingly to Mr. Crookle that evening.

On the appointed day Traddles and I reported to the prison where Mr. Crookle was power. It was an immense and solid building erected at a vast expense. In the office we were introduced to Mr. Old Schoolmaster who was one of a group composed of two or three of the lower sort of magistrates and some visitors they had brought.

He received me like a man who had formed my mind to long ago, and had never seen me before. On my introducing Traddles, Mr. Crookle expressed in his manner, but in an inferior degree, that he had always been Traddles's guide philosopher and friend. Our venerable master was a great but old man, and not improved in appearance. His temper was as fiery as ever.

After some conversation among these gentlemen, from which I might have supposed that there was nothing in the world to be kept that is taken into account but the supreme comfort of prisoners at any expense, and nothing on the wide earth to be done outside prison bars, we began our inspection. It being then just dinner time, we went first into the great kitchen, where every prisoner's dinner was on a case of being set out separately, (to be handed to him in his cell, with the regularity and precision of clock-work.) I learned that the system required high living.

As we were going through some of the magnificient passages I inquired of Mr. Crookle and his friends what were supposed to be the main advantages of the new gaol, being and universally

overriding system" I found them to be the perfect isolation of prisoners so that no one man in confinement there, knew anything about another and the reduction of prisoners to a wholesome state of mind, leading to sincere contrition and repentance.

I found a vast amount of profession, varying very little in character varying very little (which I thought exceedingly suspicious even in words) Above all I found that the most professing men were the greatest objects of interest, and that their concert their vanity, their want of excitement, and their love of deception (which many of them possessed to an almost incredible extent, as their histories shewed) all prompted these professions and were all gratified by them.

However I heard so repeatedly, in the course of our gangs to and fro, of a certain Number Twenty Seven who was the favourite, and who really appeared to be a Model Prisoner, that I resolved to suspend my judgment until I should see Twenty Seven. I heard so much of Twenty Seven of his poor admissions to everybody around him and of the beautiful letters he constantly wrote to his mother which he seemed to consider in a very bad way) that I became quite impatient to see him : I had to restrain my impatience for some time on account of Twenty Seven being reserved for a concluding effect. But at last we came to the door of his cell, and Mr Creake looking through a little hole in it reported to us, in a state of the greatest admiration, that he was reading a Hymn Book.

There was such a rust of heads jammed stely, to see Number Twenty Seven reading his Hymn Book that the little hole was blocked up, six or seven heads deep. To remedy this inconvenience, and give us an opportunity of conversing with Twenty Seven in all his purity, Mr Creake directed the door of the cell to be unlocked, and Twenty Seven to be invited out into the passage. This was done and whom should Traubles and I then behold to our amazement in his converted Number Twenty Seven but URAN HEER!

He knew us directly; and said, as he came out—with the old writhe,—

"How do you do, Mr. Copperfield? How do you do, Mr. Traddles?"

This recognition caused a general admiration in the party. I rather thought that every one was struck by his not being proud, and taking notice of us.

"Well, Twenty Seven," said Mr. Creakle, mournfully admiring him. "How do you find yourself to-day?"

"I am very humble, sir!" replied Uriah Heep.

"You are always so, Twenty Seven," said Mr. Creakle.

Here, another gentleman asked, with extreme anxiety, "Are you quite comfortable?"

"Yes, I thank you, sir!" said Uriah Heep, looking in that direction. "Far more comfortable here, than ever I was outside. I see my follies now, sir. That's what makes me comfortable."

Several gentlemen were much affected; and a third questioner, forcing himself to the front, inquired with extreme feeling, "How do you find the beef?"

"Thank you, sir," replied Uriah, glancing in the new direction of this voice, "it was tougher yesterday than I could wish; but it's my duty to bear. I have committed follies, gentlemen," said Uriah, looking round with a meek smile, "and I ought to bear the consequences without repining."

"You are quite changed?" said Mr. Creakle.

"Oh dear, yes, sir!" cried this hopeful penitent.

"You wouldn't relapse, if you were going out?" asked somebody else.

"Oh de-ar no, sir!"

"Well!" said Mr. Creakle, "this is very gratifying. You have addressed Mr. Copperfield, Twenty Seven. Do you wish to say anything further to him?"

"You knew me a long time before I came here and was changed, Mr. Copperfield," said Uriah, looking at me; and a

face

more villainous look I never saw, even on his visage. " You knew me when, in spite of my follies, I was humble among them that was proud, and meek among them that was violent—you was violent to me yourself, Mr. Copperfield. Once, you struck me i blow in the face, you know." *As if*

General commiseration. Several indignant glances directed at me?

" But I forgive you, Mr. Copperfield," said Uriah, making his forgiving nature the subject of a most impious and awful parallel, which I shall not record. " I forgive everybody. It would ill become me to bear malice. I freely forgive you, and I hope you'll curb your passions in future. I hope Mr. W. will repent, and Miss W., and all of that sinful lot. You've been visited with affliction, and I hope it may do you good; but you'd better have come here. Mr. W. had better have come here, and Miss W. too. The best wish I could give you, Mr. Copperfield, and give all of you gentlemen, is, that you could be took up and brought here. When I think of my past follies, and my present state, I am sure it would be best for you. I pity all who ain't brought here!"

He sneaked back into his cell, amidst a little chorus of approbation; and both Traddles and I experienced a great relief when he was locked in.

" Do you know," said I to a Warder as we walked along the passage, " what felony was Number Twenty Seven's last folly?"

The answer was that it was a Bank case.

" A fraud on the Bank of England?" I asked.

" Yes, sir. Fraud, forgery, and conspiracy. He and some others. He set the others on. It was a deep plot for a large sum. Sentence, transportation for life."

CHAPTER XXI

I took up my abode in my aunt's house at Dover, and occasionally went to London to consult Traddles on business

matters. He had managed for me, in my absence, with the soundest judgment; and my worldly affairs were prospering.

I had been at home about two months. I had seen Agnes frequently.

It was a cold harsh winter day when I rode to Canterbury this time. I found Agnes alone. Having welcomed me as usual, she took her work-basket and sat in one of the old-fashioned windows.

I sat beside her on the window-seat. As I looked at her beautiful face, observant of her work, she raised her mild clear eyes, and saw that I was looking at her.

" You are thoughtful to-day, Trotwood!"

" Agnes, shall I tell you what about? I came to tell you."

She put aside her work, as she used to do when we were seriously discussing anything; and gave me her whole attention.

" My dear Agnes, do you doubt my being true to you?"

" No!" she answered, with a look of astonishment.

" Agnes! Ever my guide and best support! If you had been more mindful of yourself, and less of me, when we grew up here together, I think my heedless fancy never would have wandered from you. When I loved Dora—fondly, Agnes, as you know—"

" Yes!" she cried, earnestly. " I am glad to know it!"

" When I loved her—even then, my love would have been incomplete, without your sympathy. I had it, and it was perfected. And when I lost her, Agnes, what should I have been without you, still! I went away, dear Agnes, loving you. I stayed away, loving you. I returned home, loving you!"

And now, I tried to tell her of the struggle I had had, and the conclusion I had come to. I also tried to lay my mind before her, truly and entirely. If she did so love me (I said) that she could take me for her husband, she could do so, on no deserving of mine, except upon the truth of my love for her.

" I am so blest, Trotwood—my heart is so overcharged—but there is one thing I must say."

"Dearest, what?"

She laid her gentle hands upon my shoulders, and looked calmly in my face.

"Do you know, yet, what it is?"

"I am afraid to speculate on what it is. Tell me, my dear."

"I have loved you all my life!"

We were married within a fortnight. Traddles and Sophy, and Doctor and Mrs. Strong, were the only guests at our quiet wedding. We left them full of joy, and drove away together.

"Dearest husband!" said Agnes. "Now that I may call you by that name, I have one thing more to tell you."

"Let me hear it."

"It grows out of the night when Dora died. She sent you for me."

"She did."

"She told me that she left me something. Can you think what it was?"

I believed I could.

"She told me that she made a last request to me, and left me a last charge."

"And it was—"

"That only I would occupy this vacant place."

And Agnes wept; and I wept with her, though we were so happy.